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No 115.

A UNIFORM EDITION OF THE FOLLOWING WORKS,
BY NEHEMIAH ADAMS, D.D.

I. *Agnes and the Little Key; or, Bereaved Parents Instructed and Comforted.*

An enlarged and corrected edition, adapted to all denominations.

II. *Bertha and her Baptism.*

III. *Catharine.*

IV. *The Friends of Christ in the New Testament.*

V. *Christ a Friend.*

VI. *The Communion Sabbath.*

VII. *Broadcast.*

TICKNOR AND FIELDS,
Publishers.

CATHARINE.

BY

Nehemiah Adams D.D.

THE AUTHOR OF "AGNES AND THE LITTLE KEY."

REVISED EDITION.

35

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TO THE

YOUNG LADIES OF MY CONGREGATION,

FRIENDS AND ACQUAINTANCES OF

CATHARINE,

AND TO EVERY FATHER

HAVING

A DAUGHTER IN HEAVEN,

These Pages

ARE AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED.

In the introduction to "Agnes," it is stated that the London publishers, of their own motion, sought and obtained permission of the Right Hon. and Right Rev. Archibald Campbell, Bishop of London, (who had within a few years lost five children, and recently several of them at once,) to dedicate that book to him. Some, who knew the customs in such cases, suggested to the author that a letter of acknowledgment would be proper; in sending which, a copy of the book "Catharine" was also forwarded. The following is the Bishop's reply: —

26 March, 1860.

My Dear Sir: — I scarcely know how to explain why I have delayed so long to answer your very kind letter, with the present of the Memoir of your beloved daughter. Believe me, I have read the touching account of her brief summons, and the beautiful words with which she assured you of her readiness to obey the Saviour's call, with deep interest. How true it is, that in the record of the griefs of other christian friends, we seem again to live over our own. Their sorrows and their comforts speak with force to our hearts, if we have ourselves been sufferers. This day, four years ago, I laid in the grave the eldest of the five dear children who were taken from us. Her name also was Catharine. She was but ten years old then, but she was a child who could not have failed, through her Saviour's love, to develope into such a woman as the Catharine of whom you write. What a blessed thought, that during the four years which have passed, she has been growing under her dear Saviour's own immediate guidance, and that whatever she might have become on earth, she is far more now.

This brotherhood of sorrows is a holy bond, which brings together those who only know of each other's sufferings, and of the strength Christ gives to bear them. How does suffering, when received as from a loved Father, make us sympathize with those called to like trials; and how holy does the bond become which unites all mourners through their common Lord, and through them feeling that those they love are in his immediate presence. * * * * * * *

Ever faithfully yours,

Rev. Dr. Adams. A. C. LONDON.

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CATHARINE.

I.

MORE THAN CONQUEROR.

Is that a death-bed where the Christian lies?
Yes,—but not his: 'Tis death itself there dies.

COLERIDGE.

SHE was not an infant — an unconscious subject of grace. But the Saviour has led through a long sickness, and through death, a daughter of nineteen years, and has made her, and those who loved and watched her, say, We are more than conquerors. To speak of Him, and not to gratify the fondness of parental love, to commend the Saviour of my child to other hearts, and to obtain for Him the affections of those to whom He is able and willing to be all which He was to her, is the sole object of these pages.

Listen, then, not to a parent's partial tale concerning his child, nor concerning mental nor bodily suffering, but to the words of one who has seen how the presence of Christ, and love to Him, can fill the dying hours with the sweetest peace, and even beauty, and the hearts of survivors with joy.

Wishing to dwell chiefly on the last scenes of this dear child's life, the reader will not be delayed by any biographical sketch. Nine years before her death, when she was between ten and eleven years of age, she gave the clearest evidence that she was renewed by the Holy Spirit. We had since that time been made happy by the growing power of Christian principle in her conduct, the clearness and steadfastness of her faith, her systematic endeavors to live a holy life, her deep regret when she had erred, and her resolute efforts to improve in every part of her character.

Through a long sickness, with consumption, for two years and three months, she felt the soothing power of unfaltering Christian hope,

which was evidently derived from a very clear perception of the way to be saved through Christ, and complete trust in the promises made to simple faith in him.

He who gave me this child, and crowned my hopes and wishes by the manifest signs of his love towards her, merits from me a tribute of gratitude and praise to which I desire and expect that eternity itself may bear witness. They who read the story, which I am about to relate, of her last few days, and think what it must be for a father to see his child made competent to meet so intelligently and deliberately, and to overcome, the last enemy, and, in doing so, helping to sustain and to comfort those who loved her, will perceive that it is a gift from God whose value nothing can increase. Bereavement and separation take nothing from it, but, on the contrary, they illustrate and enforce our obligations. For since we must needs die, and are as water that is spilled upon the ground, which cannot be gathered up again, such a death as this amounts to positive happiness

by the side of a contrasted experience in the joyless, hopeless death of a child, or friend. But without further preface, I proceed to the narrative.

Never before had it fallen to my lot to bear that message to one who was sick, "The Master is come, and calleth for thee." In previous cases of deep, personal interest, this has been unnecessary. But in the present case there was a resolute purpose, and an expectation, of recovery, till within a week of dissolution, and, on our part, a belief that life might still be lengthened. Such cases involve nice questions of duty. Where the patient has evidently made timely preparation to die, it is needless to dispel that half illusion which seems to be one feature of consumption — an illusion which is so thin that we feel persuaded the patient sees through it, while, nevertheless, it serves all the purposes of hope. To take away that hope where no beneficial end is to be secured, is cruel. A mistaken, and somewhat

morbid, sense of duty to tell the whole truth, and a conscientious but unenlightened fear of practising deception, sometimes lead friends to remove, from a sick person, that power which hope gives in sustaining the sickness, in prolonging comfort, and in helping the gradual descent into the grave. When a sick person is resolute and hopeful, it is surprising to see how many annoyances of sickness are prevented or easily borne, and how life, and even cheerfulness, may be indefinitely extended. But when hope is taken away, or, rather, when, instead of looking towards life with that instinctive love of it which God has implanted, we turn from "the warm precincts of the cheerful day," and look into the grave, it is affecting to see how the disease takes advantage of it, and sufferings ensue which would have been prevented by keeping up even the ambiguous thoughts of recovery. Sick people have reflections and feelings which exert an influence upon them beyond our discernment, and which frequently need not our literal interpretations

of symptoms, and our exhortations, to make them more effectual. But where there is evidently no preparedness for death, and the patient, we fear, is deceiving himself, no one who has suitable views of Christian duty will fail to impress him with the necessity of attending to the things which belong to his peace, even at considerable risk of abridging life.

Waiting, therefore, for medical discernment to signify when the last possible effort to lengthen out the days of the sufferer had been made, one morning I received the intimation that those days would, in all probability, be but very few. After the physician had left the house, and I had sought help and strength from God, I lost no time, but took my place at the dear patient's side, to make the announcement.

God help those on whom he lays such duty. The hour had virtually come in which father and child must part, and the father was to break that message to his child. But how could mortal strength endure the effort?

Before I left my room for hers, there came

to my mind these words — "But now, thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not, for I have redeemed thee; I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee." Trusting in that promise, I sat down, as it were, over against the sepulchre, to prepare my child for her entrance into it, — nay, for her departure into heaven.

The gradual arrival of the truth to her apprehension, through questions which she began to ask, and my answers to them, finally led her to inquire if I supposed she could not live long. I told her that the physician thought that she was extremely weak, and that we must not be surprised at any sudden event in her case. She said, without any change of countenance, "Why, father, you surprise me; I thought that

I might get well; is it possible that I cannot live long? I have thought of recovering much more than of dying. . . It seems a long space to pass over between this and heaven, in so short a time. I wonder how I can so suddenly obtain all the feelings which I need for such a change." These expressions I wrote down immediately after the interview. I told her, in reply, that she had been living at peace with God through his Son; that it had hitherto been her duty to live, and to strive for it; but now God had indicated his will concerning her, and she might be sure that God will always give us feelings suited to every condition in which he sees fit to place us.

On seeing her again towards evening, I found that the expression of her sick face — the weary, exhausted look of one grappling with a stronger power — had passed away, and, in exchange, there was peace, and even happiness. She began herself to say, "When you told me this forenoon that I could not live, it surprised me; but I have come to it now, and it is all

right. Every thing is settled. I have nothing to do — no fear, no anxiety about any thing. More passages of Scripture and verses of hymns have come to my mind to-day, than in all my sickness hitherto." Wishes respecting some family arrangements were then expressed, particularly with reference to the younger children, and these wishes were uttered in about the same tone and manner as though we were parting for a temporary absence from each other. The mother of my youngest child had, at her death, given her in special charge to this daughter, and she wished to live that she might educate her. She made the transfer of her little trust with calmness, and then her "Good night" was uttered with a gentle playfulness, like that of her early days.

Nor was her frame of mind an excitement, or a fictitious experience, to end with sleep. The next forenoon she renewed the conversation. She said, "In the night I awoke many times, and always with this thought — I am

not going to live. Instead of fear and dread, peace came with it. Names of Christ flowed in upon my mind; and once I awoke with these words in my thoughts—'And there shall be no night there.' Now I know that I am to die, I feel less nervous. I have a calm, unruffled feeling." She expressed some natural apprehensions, only, about the possibility of dissolution not having occurred when we should suppose that she was no more. I told her how kindly God had ordered it that we do not all die together, but one by one, the survivors doing all that the departed would desire — which satisfied her, and removed her only fear.

She asked leave to make a request respecting her grave; that, if any device were placed upon the stone, it might be of flowers, which had been such a joy and consolation to her in her sickness. She named the lily-of-the-valley and rose buds. "I love the white flowers," said she. "If you think best, let them be represented in some simple way. . . One great

desire which I have had was to assort some leaves of flowers into forms for you. As my bouquets fell to pieces, I gathered the best petals, and leaves, and sprigs, and I have them in a book;" which, at her request, I then reached for her. I turned the pages. The book was full of beautiful relics from tokens of remembrance which kind friends had sent to her, and among them were some curiously mottled, green and rose-colored, petals, which she had designed for a wreath, on the first page of the little herbarium, which it was her intention to prepare; and then, with great hesitancy, and protesting their unworthiness, she repeated these simple lines, which she had composed for an inscription within the wreath. I wrote them down from her lips:

TO MY FATHER.

These flowers, which gave me such comfort and hope,
I pressed, in my sickness, for you;
Accept them, though faded; they never will droop;
And believe that my heart is there too.

They who showered these tokens of their

regard upon her, will be pleased to know that their gifts did not wholly perish, but that they will constitute an abiding memorial of her friends, as well as of her.

"I know," she continued, "that I am a great sinner; but I also believe that my sins are washed away by the blood of Christ." The way of justification by faith was clear to her mind. She knew whom she believed, and was persuaded that he was able to keep that which she had committed to him against that day.

In her whispering voice, which disease had for some time so nearly hushed, she said, "I shall sing in heaven." Her voice had been the charm of many a pleasant circle. But she added, "I shall no more sing —

> 'I'm a pilgrim, and I'm a stranger;
> I can tarry, I can tarry but a night.'"

And in a moment she added, —

> "Of that country to which I am going,
> My Redeemer, my Redeemer is the light."

"Some people," she said, "wish to die in

order to get rid of pain. What a motive! I am afraid that sometimes they get rid of it only to renew it. There was —" And here she checked herself, saying, "But I will not mention any name," a feeling of charitableness and tenderness coming over her, as though she might be thought to have judged a dying person harshly.

The day before she died, as I was spending the Sabbath forenoon by her, she breathed out these words: —

> "O, how soft that bed must be,
> Made in sickness, Lord, by thee!
> And that rest, how soft and sweet,
> Where Jesus and the sufferer meet!"

In almost the same breath, she said, "O, see that beautiful yellow," — directing my attention to a sprig of acacia in a bunch of flowers; all showing that her religious feelings were not raptures, but flowed along upon a level with her natural delight at beautiful objects. To illustrate this, I have mentioned several of the incidents already related.

She spoke of a young friend, who has much that the world gives its votaries to enhance her prospects in this life. I said, "Would you exchange conditions with her?" "Not for ten thousand worlds," was her energetic reply. "No!" she added; "I fear she has not chosen the good part."

Sabbath afternoon, the mortal conflict was upon her. The restlessness of death, the craving for some change of posture, the cold sweats, the labored respiration, all had the effect merely to make her ask, "How long do you think I must suffer?" That labored breathing tired her; she wished that I could regulate it for her. "How long," said she, "will it probably continue?"

I told her that heaven was a free gift at the last as well as at first; that we could not pass within the gate at will, but must wait God's time; that there were sufferings yet necessary to her complete preparation for heaven, of which she would see the use hereafter, but not now. This made her wholly

quiet; and after that she rode at anchor many hours, hard by the inner lighthouse, waiting for the Pilot.

The last words which she uttered to me, an hour before she died, were, "I am going to get my crown." I wondered at her in my thoughts, (O, help my unbelief!) to hear a dying sinner so confident. I said to myself, "O woman, great is thy faith." She knew that her crown was a free gift, purchased at infinite expense; a crown, instead of deserved chains, under darkness. All unmerited, and more than forfeited, yet she spoke of her crown, because she believed with a simple faith, taking Christ at his word, and being willing to receive rewards and honors from him without projecting her own sense of unworthiness to stay the overflowings of infinite love and grace towards her. So that, in her own esteem as undeserving as the chief of sinners, thinking as little as possible of her own righteousness, and being among the last to claim any thing of God, she could say with

one who would not admit that any sinner was chief above him, "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."

Between two and three o'clock on Monday afternoon, January 19, she was quietly receiving some food from the nurse, when suddenly she said, "The room seems dark." She then made a surprising effort, such as she had been incapable of for some time, and reached forward from her pillow, saying, "Who is that at the door?" The nurse was with her alone, and at her side, the family being at the table. Coming to her room, we found that she was apparently sinking into a deep sleep, as though it were only a sleep, profound and quiet.

I asked her if she knew me.

She made no answer.

I said, "You know Jesus." A smile played about her mouth. We rejoiced, and wept for joy.

I then said, "If you know father, press my hand." She gave me no sign — that smile being her last intelligent act. — And so she passed within the veil.

I was able to relate all this from my pulpit the Sabbath after her decease, not merely because the period of the greatest suffering under bereavement had not come, but chiefly because the consolations of the trying scene, and hopes full of immortality, had not lost their new power. I was therefore like those who, on the first Christian Sabbath morning, "departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy, and did run to bring his disciples word."

It is intimated above that the greatest suffering at the death of a friend does not occur immediately upon the event. It comes when the world have forgotten that you have cause to weep; for when the eyes are dry, the heart is often bleeding. There are hours, — no, they are more concentrated than hours, — there are moments, when the thought of a lost and loved

one, who has perished out of your family circle, suspends all interest in every thing else; when the memory of the departed floats over you like a wandering perfume, and recollections come in throngs with it, flooding the soul with grief. The name, of necessity or accidentally spoken, sets all your soul ajar; and your sense of loss, utter loss, for all time, brings more sorrow with it by far than the parting scene.

She who was the sweet singer of my little Israel is no more. The child whose sense of beauty made her the swiftest herald to me of every fair discovery and new household joy, will never greet me again with her surprises of gladness. She who, leaning upon my arm as we walked, silently conveyed to me such a sense of evenness, firmness, dignity; she whose child-like love was turning into the womanly affection for a father; she who was complete in herself, as every good child is, not suggesting to your thoughts what you would have a child be, but filling out the orb of your ideal beauty,

still partly in outline; her seat, her place at the table, at prayers, at the piano, at church; the sight of her going out and coming in; her tones of speech, her helpful spirit and hands, and all the unfinished creations of her skill, every thing that made her that which the growing associations with her name had built up in our hearts, — all is gone, for this life; it is removed like a tree; it is departed like a shepherd's tent.

And all this, too, is saved. It survives, or I would not, I could not, write thus. There comes to my sorrowing heart some such message as the sons of Jacob brought to their father, when they said, "Joseph is yet alive, and he is governor over all the land of Egypt."

Jesus of Nazareth has been in my dwelling, and has done a great work of healing. He has saved my child; saved her to be a happy spirit; forever saved her for himself, to employ her powers of mind and heart in his blissful service; saved her for the joyful welcome and

embraces of her mother, and of a second mother, who laid deep and strong foundations in her character for goodness and knowledge. He has saved her for me, through all eternity. She will be my sweet singer again; she will have in store for me all the wonderful discoveries which her intense love of beauty will have made her treasure up, to impart, when the child becomes, as it were, parent, for a little while, to the soul of the parent in heaven, new-born. I said to her, a day or two before she died, "Those mothers will show you things in heaven; for we read, '*And he shewed me* a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and the Lamb.'"

But John mistook this heavenly saint for an angel, so glorious was his appearance, and he fell down to worship him, but was told, "See thou do it not; for I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book." Then what will she herself be, when these eyes

behold her again? And what will she have treasured up to tell me? she, who always brought rare things for me from the woods and the shore, surpassing those of her companions. If He who redeemed her, and has presented her faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, will bestow that nurture and culture upon her which are implied in leading her to living fountains of waters, what will she be? and how good it will seem that she left earth so early, since it was the will of God, to enter upon such a career of bliss!

A few years ago, I appropriated a wedding gift from a friend to the purchase of a guitar for her, as a birthday gift in her early sickness. To assist her in learning to play upon it, I first gained some knowledge of the instrument. We kept it in its case in my study; and sometimes, on coming home, and feeling in the mood of it, I wished to handle it, and instead of unlocking the case to see if the instrument were there, I would

knock upon it; and straightway what turbulence of harmonies rang from all the strings. Now, it is so with every thing connected with her memory; every thing associated with her, even though outwardly sombre and dreary, like those black cases for musical instruments, being appealed to, or accidentally encountered, sings of her still, with a troubled and a pathetic, pleasing music.

In her very early childhood, she and two of the children were sick with a children's epidemic. The crisis had passed; an anxious day with regard to one of the children had been followed by entire relief from our fears. As we sat at table that evening, we heard music from the chambers of the sick children; we opened the door and listened. This daughter was singing, and the chorus of her little school song was, "All are here, all are here." She did not think of the signification which those words had to our hearts. It was one of those household pleasures which have so much of heaven in them. I can sometimes

hear her singing to me now, from those upper skies, in the name of the four who have gone there from my dwelling, "All are here, all are here." She bequeathed her guitar, but her voice and hand now join with "the voice of harpers harping with their harps."

We sometimes think that they miss great good who depart from us in early years; that one who has arrived at the entrance to the world's great feast must be sadly disappointed to be led away, never to go in. Now, it is true that we must not shrink from the battle of life; we must take upon ourselves, if God ordains it, the great jeopardy of disappointment and sorrow, and the chance of life's joys; we must each stand in his lot; we must send children forth into the harvest of the earth for sheaves, and whether they faint and die under their load, or deck themselves with garlands, — still, let them be laborers together with God, and let us not seek exemption for them. But if God ordains their early translation to heaven, what can earth afford them in the way

of pleasure, granting the cup to be full and unalloyed, to be compared with fulness of joy? Fair maidens in heaven, — and O, how many of them has consumption gathered in! — fair maidens there are like the white flowers, which are sacred to peculiar times and scenes. How goodly must be their array! What a perpetual spring tide of vivacious joy and delight do they create in heaven. It is pleasant to have a child among them.

It has been my privilege to see, in this child, an example of true preparation for death, which begins before the expectation of dying brings the least discredit, or breath of suspicion, upon our motives in attending to the subject of religion. Preparation for death consists in justification by faith, extending its influence into the whole character, to bring us under the rule of Christ. The fruit of this is friendship with God, the confidence of love, knowing whom we have believed, with the persuasion of our having committed to him an infinite trust, and that he will keep it with

covenant faithfulness. So when death comes and knocks at the door, it is true the heart beats quicker, as it is apt to do whoever knocks there; for, to give up one's hold on life, to turn and look eternal things full in the face, to think of meeting God, and of having your endless condition fixed, summons the whole of natural and acquired fortitude; and only they who have an unseen arm to lean upon at such a time, endure in that trial. Then past experience comes in with her powerful aid: "I have fought a good fight;" "the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps;" "remember, O Lord, how I have walked before thee." Thus there is something to make you feel that your justification, by free grace, has the evidence afforded by its fruits; and the preparation to die may be likened to that of which the Saviour speaks when he says, "He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit." I have seen it, have watched it, have studied it, in the dying scenes of this child. Hers was

not the experience of the sinner, pulled suddenly from the waves by a hand which he had for a long time, nay, always, spurned; but her dying was an arrival at the end of a voyage, the coming home of a good child to long-expecting hearts and arms. We said one to another around her dying bed, — yes, we had composure to say, as we watched that parting scene, that fading cloud, that sinking gale, that dying wave, that shutting eye of day, — "Think of such a poor, helpless, dying creature, if, in the sense intended by those words, she should 'fall into the hands of the living God.'" And we glorified God in her. Never did I see and feel more deeply, by contrast, the folly of trusting to a death-bed repentance, to repair the errors of a wasted life. It is a deliberate attempt at fraud upon the Most High; it is folly; for the risk is fearful, and could we obtain salvation, how mercenarily! — and what a memorial would it be in heaven of loss, instead of being "a crown of righteousness!" They who are all their lifetime ignorant, being unfor-

tunately deprived of opportunity for religious instruction, may with wonder and joy accept the surprising news of pardon, through Christ, on a dying bed, and soar to the same heights with apostles in their praises of redeeming love. But if we hear of salvation by Christ all our life long, and know our duty, but prefer the pleasures of sin for a season, and think that in the swellings of Jordan we shall find peace and safety, our conduct deserves all the opprobrious names which are heaped upon it by inspired tongues and pens. We who are parents must teach our children that religion does not consist merely in being pardoned, and, if pardoned, no matter whether early or late; but that it is the first, the constant, the all-pervading rule of life, God and his service the chief end of man, and that the pleasures of religion are the sweetest pleasures, hallowing all others which are innocent, and leading us to reject those, and only those, which would be unsuitable or injurious, even if religious custom did not forbid them. We must know

this, and practise upon it, ourselves; else, how can we expect the children to believe it?

The exceeding relief which a timely preparation for death by an early consecration of herself to God, imparted to this child and to us, was felt in this, that she and we had no distressing thoughts at her total inability, for a long time, to join in prayer with others, or to be conversed with in any way that excited much feeling. The diseased throat, where, as we all know, our emotions, even in health and strength, make such interference with our comfort, prevented her from joining in any religious exercises, because she would then be liable to the excitement of feelings which, in the way just intimated, would have injured her. With such affections of the bronchial passages, efforts of mind which are not spontaneous are sometimes agony. Connected endeavors to follow conversation and prayer were impossible, and she told me, on saying this, that she took great comfort from a remark, in a book,

addressed to a sick person — "Do not think, but pray." She prayed much herself; her thoughts, too, were prayers, in certain cases. Now, in that weakened condition, what could she have done, and what would have been her father's feelings, had she not, in health and strength, arrived at such a state of religious knowledge and experience as to remove anxiety for her spiritual welfare, and to make us feel that she had Christ in her, the hope of glory? When the cry was made, "Behold, the bridegroom cometh," she arose and trimmed her lamp, and had oil in her vessel with her lamp. Wealth could not purchase the relief and satisfaction which this gave to her friends; — so truly is religion called the "pearl of great price;" so literally true are the Saviour's words, "But one thing is needful." It is the greatest blessing which a young person can bestow on Christian parents, to be a Christian; and what its value is to surviving parents, ask those who sorrow as they that have no hope. When a

young Christian comes to die, he testifies that he lost nothing, but gained every thing, with eternal life, by being a Christian in his early years. I can imagine what this child would say to one and another of her young friends who may read these pages, and how she would seek to persuade them, as the first great duty of their existence, and for their best good here, and for their everlasting peace, to choose the good part, which will never be taken away from them.

Her funeral was a scene from which many went away rejoicing in God; and not a few date new progress in the Christian life from it, by means of the new and striking illustration which they there had of the Saviour's power and love. The Choir struck the key note of heaven in their opening strains, by chanting, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing." They gave us, too, her favorite song, by which she was remembered in several circles, at home

and abroad, before she was sick, and the words of which, now, seem to have had a prophetic meaning from her lips: —

"I'm a pilgrim, and I'm a stranger;
I can tarry, I can tarry but a night;" —

which was sung at the funeral with a sweetness which added much to the associations with it in our minds; and in the closing hymn, how strange it seemed, at a funeral, to hear the singers, though by our own request and though in accordance with all which had passed, bid us

"Proclaim abroad his name,
Tell of his matchless fame,
What wonders done!
Shout through hell's dark profound,
Let the whole earth resound,
Till the high heavens rebound,
The victory's won;" —

and to hear them, as they cried one to another, saying, —

"All hail the glorious day,
When, through the heavenly way,
Lo, He shall come;

While they who pierced him wail;
His promise shall not fail;
Saints, see your King prevail;
Come, dear Lord, come."

For those ministrations of love and tenderness in the last, sad offices to the dead, which no wealth could buy, repeated now by some of the same hands several times in my dwelling, there are no words of gratitude adequate to the great debt of love. The mothers of my church, who met weekly with her mother for prayer, remembered her child, and provided nurses for her, to her own unspeakable comfort and our great relief. Friends and strangers, touched with her protracted sickness, poured blessings around her couch; fruits, in their season, and when out of their season, of what almost unearthly beauty! and flowers which, with the fruits, made that sick room seem like the garden which the Lord planted in Eden. Such have been the alleviations of pain and suffering, the comforts, and even the pleasures, and above all the rich spiritual con-

solations and joys, and the more than conquering faith of the dying hour, — such a union in all this of Jesus and his friends, — that I have made the case of the ruler of the synagogue mine, of whom, as he went to his afflicted house, it is said, "And Jesus arose and followed him, and so did his disciples." They will go wherever Jesus leads the way; and he will lead the way wherever there is a lamb to be folded in his bosom.

There were not wanting those who lent me their sepulchre, in the city, for a season — a kindness always peculiar and affecting, but also needful in this instance, because of the great snows which made the roads to Mount Auburn impassable for several days. Nor can I forget that, when Saturday evening closed upon us, words and tokens of kindness came from the younger members of my congregation, who had provided for the last earthly things which the precious dust of their young friend required; and so they seemed to bid me rest from all care and thoughtfulness, upon the

"Sabbath day, according to the commandment." All which should increase my feelings of sympathy and kindness for the sick, and especially for the sick poor, whose rooms, and whose dying hours, and whose griefs, are oftentimes in such contrast to those into which divine and human loving kindness seem striving to pour their abundant consolations. As the family retired from the dying scene, and were weeping together, a father came to my door, in that great snow-storm, to say that his son, the young man, not a member of my congregation, whom I had several times visited, was near his end, and would like to see me. Stranger comparatively though he was, and impassable as the streets were by any vehicle, and almost by foot passengers, my gratitude for the sweet and peaceful end of my own dear child, and for her undoubted admission to the realms of bliss, was such, that, within an hour or two, I forced my way to a distant part of the city, to assist another departing spirit for its flight. This heart has

no more fortitude, nor has it less of natural affection and sensibility, than ordinarily falls to the lot of men; hence those consolations must have been great, that support and strength equal to the day, that hope concerning my child an anchor sure and steadfast, which enabled me thus to go from her clay, just cold, to aid a passing spirit in obtaining like precious faith with hers, and the same inheritance. My motive in thus lifting a little of the veil, or in placing a light behind the transparency, of my private feelings, I trust will be seen to be, that I may comfort others with the comfort wherewith I was comforted of God.

But there awaits me a blessing, with a joy, surpassing all that has gone before. "My daughter is even now dead; but come and lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live." From her grave, which was soon made by the side of kindred dust, Jesus will raise her up at the last day; her voice will come to that body; her youthful beauty will be reëstab-

lished by her likeness to Christ's own glorious body; she will lean upon my arm again; the separation and absence will enhance the joy of meeting; we shall say, How like a hand-breadth was the separation! We shall see reasons full of wisdom and love for the sickness and the early death. We shall part no more. All this has more than once made me say, and sing,—

"O, for this love, let rocks and hills
Their lasting silence break,
And all harmonious human tongues
The Saviour's praises speak."

Young friend, you will need him as the great Physician, the Friend in sorrow, the Forerunner in the dark passages of life, the Conqueror of death, the Lord our Righteousness, and, all endearing names in one, Immanuel, God with us.

Parents, you will need him for your children. Children, you will need him when father and mother, one or both, have forsaken

you, or, if alive, can only make you feel how little their fond love can do for you. When the name of *father*, cannot rouse you, nor your cold hand return the pressure of your father's hand, you will need a nearer, dearer friend, in the person of Him who loved you, and gave himself for you.

It has been one of the richest joys of my pastoral life, that I have sent to her mother in heaven her child, whom God had prepared for so early a departure out of this world. This ministry of reconciliation has been blessed to the salvation of my child. It should make me love the children of my pastoral charge more than ever, seek to gather them into the fold of Christ, that whole families, each like a constellation, may rise together in the firmament of heaven; and, in the mean time, that the members of every household, as they desert us one by one, may call back to us, and say, for the departed, "All are here."

God takes a family here and there, in a circle of acquaintances and friends, and greatly

afflicts them; and thus he teaches others. As we look, therefore, upon the afflicted, we ought to say,—

> "For us they languish, and for us they die;
> And shall they languish, shall they die, in vain?"

God is the same when he takes away the child, as when he laid that gift in our hands. Perhaps, indeed, the removal is really a greater exercise of love than the gift. It must seem good and acceptable in the sight of God, if, when we are bereaved, we employ ourselves occasionally in rehearsing before him the circumstances in his past goodness, which, at the time, made it exceedingly sweet and precious. Our debt of obligation for it is not yet fully paid; nor is it diminished at all by the removal of the blessing. Instead of abandoning ourselves to grief, we do well if we commune with God more frequently respecting his signal acts of favor in connection with the lost blessing.

But the memory of lost joys is always apt

to depress the mind inordinately. We question whether it is really better to have

"loved and lost
Than never to have loved at all."

Taking a future life into the account, surely no doubt can remain as to that question; but one who has really loved, will not be long in coming to the same conclusion, irrespective of the future. Must God abstain from making us exceedingly happy, because, forsooth, we shall be so unhappy when, in the exercise of the same goodness and wisdom which dictated the gift, he sees it best to take it away? If we love him more than we love his gifts, then the removal of them will make us love him more than ever.

"Though now He frowns, I'll praise the Almighty's name,
And bless the source whence past enjoyments came."

We often hear it said, that every thing which happens to us is for our good, even in this world. — Many things happen to men, even to

Christians, which are plainly not for their good in this life, though all things will, eventually, work together for good to them that love God. Some things, then, even here, are intended to be life-long sorrows and trials. Their object is reproof and constant admonition. We need another state of existence to explain the present. If that future state does not prove that earthly discipline has had its designed effect, the sorrows of this life show that God can bear to see us suffer, even when he foresees that no good will result to the sufferer. For while men suffer excruciatingly under bereavements, these sufferings often fail to make them better. God foresees all this. Hence God is able to look upon suffering which he sees will not be for the good of the afflicted.

If, now, his design in our trials (which pierced his heart before they reached ours) is utterly frustrated by our sins, the question will arise, whether the God who can bear to see us suffer for our good, which, nevertheless, he foresees will not be effected, will not be able to

see us suffer as the fruit of our sins, and of our resistance to his designs. One who has endured much mental suffering cannot have failed to see, that God's parental relation to us is not analogous to that of parent and child among men. It terminates in the relations of governor and of judge; being, indeed, from the first, included in those relations. This is not so in our earthly relationship. God sees men suffer as no earthly parent could; he inflicts pain as no earthly parent should. All is for our profit; but if that object fails through our perverseness, we are instructed, by our experience, that if God can look on mental anguish and not relieve it, because he seeks an ulterior good, the punishment of sin, the natural and just consequences of disobedience to the great laws of the universe, may be, in their extended impression, another ulterior good, which will warrant the same mental sufferings after death, and forever.

Could I be permitted, therefore, I would take by the hand every bereaved father whom

so great an affliction as the death of a child has not succeeded in bringing into a state of preparation for heaven, and kindly ask how he expects to bear a final and endless separation. "If thou hast run with the footmen, and they have wearied thee, then how canst thou contend with horses? and if in the land of peace, wherein thou trustedst, they wearied thee, then how wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan?" God describes to his ancient people one of the great sorrows which will happen to them, if they forsake him, in their separations, by captivity, from their children: "Thy sons and thy daughters shall be given unto another people, and thine eyes shall look, and fail with longing, for them all the day long; and there shall be no might in thy hand." Pains of absence, sudden convulsions of feeling at the remembered looks, form, words, and motions of a loved one, sometimes are as when men feel the earth quaking under them; and then, again, they entirely prostrate us, for the moment, like a tornado. Homesickness in a foreign land, —

an ocean stretching between us and the objects of our love — is an admonition to us with respect to future, endless separations. The hopeless death of a child has sometimes had the effect to change the long-established faith of a parent with regard to future retribution; all the acknowledged principles of interpretation, all the results of meditation and prayer, the theory of the divine government which has been built up in the soul, till it became identified with personal consciousness, the whole analogy of faith, — all, have been swept away by the overmastering power of parental love for one who, when he died, left his friends to sorrow as they that have no hope. Now, supposing a parent to fail of heaven, and to retain his instinctive parental feelings, the endless separation between him and his family will be a source of sorrow which needs only to be kept up, by an ever-living memory, to constitute all which is pictured in the boldest metaphors of inspired tongues and pens. A father in disgrace, or

under ignominy, suffers intensely when he sees or thinks of his children, provided his natural sensibilities are not destroyed. A father punished, hereafter, by his Redeemer and Judge, a father banished from the company of heaven, knowing that his family are there, and that if his influence had had its full effect, they would all have perished with him, — or a father with a part of his children with him in perdition, the wife and mother with one or more of the children in heaven, — is a picture of woe which nothing but timely repentance and faith in Christ may prevent from being a reality in the experience of some who read these lines. Can it be true, as Bishop Hall says, that "to be happy is not so sweet a state as it is miserable to have been happy"? O man, if you have a child in heaven, think that, among the sweet influences of divine love, there probably is no more powerful motive to draw your affections towards God, than that glimpse which you sometimes seem to have of this child's face, on which heaven

has traced its lineaments of peace and bliss; or that sudden whisper of a gentle, child-like voice, now and then heard by the ear of fancy, persuading you to be a Christian. Do not let the world, or shame, or procrastination, lead you to resist such efforts of almighty love to save you. He who has had a child saved by Christ, and will not be himself a Christian, — what more can God do to save him?

The breaking up of our homes is one of the mysteries of God's providence. The last thing, perhaps, which we might suppose would be allowed, is, the removal of a mother from a family of young children. This being so frequent, we cease to wonder at any other dispensations; we conclude that separations are to be made, regardless of any and every seeming necessity and endearment. "Sirs, I perceive that this voyage will be with hurt and much damage, not only of the lading and ship, but also of our lives." The conviction is forced upon us that there is

another world, for which we must make all our calculations. "There is a better world," said the distinguished William Wirt, after the death of his daughter, in 1831, — "there is a better world, of which I have thought too little. To that world she has gone, and thither my affections have followed her. This was Heaven's design. I see and feel it as distinctly as if an angel had revealed it. I often imagine that I can see her beckoning me to the happy world to which she has gone. She was my companion, my office companion, my librarian, my clerk. My papers now bear her indorsement. She pursued her studies in my office, by my side, sat with me, walked with me, was my inexpressibly sweet and inseparable companion, — never left me but to go and sit with her mother. We knew all her intelligence, all her pure and delicate sensibility, the quickness and power of her perceptions, her seraphic love. She was all love, and loved all God's creation, even the animals, trees, and plants. She loved her God and

Saviour with an angel's love, and died like a saint." *

About the same time, he writes to his wife, —

"I want only my blessed Saviour's assurance of pardon and acceptance to be at peace. I wish to find no rest short of rest in him. — Let us both look up to that heaven — where our Saviour dwells, and from which he is showing us the attractive face of our blessed and happy child, and bidding us prepare to come to her, since she can no more visibly come to us. I have no taste now for worldly business. I go to it reluctantly. I would keep company only with my Saviour and his holy book. I dread the world, the strife, and contention, and emulation of the bar; yet I will do my duty — this is part of my religion."

In December, 1833, another daughter died; but he writes, —

"I look upon life as a drama, bearing the

* Kennedy's Life of William Wirt — letter to Judge Carr.

same sort, though not the same degree, of relation to eternity, as an hour spent at the theatre, and the fictions there exhibited . . . do to the whole of real life. Nor is there any thing in this passing pageant worth the sorrow that we lavish on it. Now, when my children or friends leave me, or when I shall be called to leave them, I consider it as merely parting for the present visit, to meet under happier circumstances, when we shall part no more."*

"All my children," said the venerable John Eliot, of Roxbury, "are either with Christ or in Christ." Happy, happy man! The little ones, blighted soon by the touch of death, surely are with Christ; "for of such is the kingdom of God." The cherub boy, and the blooming, broken flower, the young daughter, — the young man in his strength, the young maiden in her beauty, — are there. As we commune together, in the pages which follow,

* Kennedy's Life of William Wirt — letter to Judge Cabell.

on themes touching this subject, God grant that every one who has not yet gladdened the heart of parent, and pastor, nay, of that infinite Friend, our Saviour, by the surrender of the heart to God, and every father and mother who is yet unprepared to join the growing circle of the family in heaven, — ('how grows in Paradise their store!') — may, as we reach the last page, find that with cords of a man, with bands of love, He who made Pleiades, and Arcturus and his sons, has united them in eternal fellowship with their departed loved ones, through faith in Christ. This, while it hallows the remainder of life with the rich, mellowed beauty of the changing leaf, and ripening grain, and shortening days, lays the foundation of that perfect happiness for which our homes are intended to prepare us; their joys alluring, their separations pointing, us to heaven.

II.

THE FEAR OF DEATH ALLEVIATED.

Yea, and moreover this full well know I:
He that's at any time afraid to die
Is in weak case, and (whatsoe'er he saith)
Hath but a wavering and a feeble faith.

GEORGE WITHER.

UNLESS we know the customs of the wandering shepherds with their flocks, one verse in the twenty-third Psalm, so often quoted in view of death, appears abrupt, but otherwise appropriate and very beautiful. One of a flock is expressing his confidence in God, his Shepherd: "When I have satisfied my hunger from the green pastures, he makes me to lie down in them; and the still, clear streams are my drink." Then a thought occurs which appears as though a dying man were speaking, and not a sheep: but it is still the language of a sheep. Keeping this in mind,

let it be remembered that the shepherds wandered from place to place to find pasture. In doing so, they were sometimes obliged to pass through dark, lonely valleys. Wild beasts, and creatures less formidable, but of hateful sight, and with doleful voices, made it difficult for the flocks to be led through such passages. There was frequently no other way from one pasturage to another but through these places of death-shade, or valleys of the shadow of death, — which was a term to express any dark and dismal place.

Now, let us imagine a flock reposing in a green pasture, and by the side of still waters, conversing about their shepherd, their pastures, and streams. One of them says, "In the midst of all this peace and contentment, there is a thought which spoils my comfort. We cannot stay here forever; we are to go, presently, beyond the mountains; they say that there are valleys, in those regions, full of dangers. My expectation is, that we shall be torn to pieces. My enjoyment of

these pastures and waters is nearly destroyed by my forebodings about those valleys."

Another of the flock replies, "Have we not an able, faithful, experienced shepherd? Have we not seen his ability to defend us in past dangers? Is he not as much concerned for our defence and safety as ourselves? While he is my shepherd, I shall not want. — Yea, though I walk through those valleys of death-shade, I will fear no evil; for he is with me; his rod and his staff they comfort me."

The shepherd carried with him two instruments — the staff, for his own support, and to attack a beast or robber; and the crook, or rod. By this crook, the shepherd guided a sheep in a dangerous pass, placing the crook under the sheep's neck, to hold him up and assist his steps. When a sheep was disposed to stray, the shepherd could hold him back with his crook. When the sheep had fallen into the power of a beast, the crook assisted in drawing him away. A good sheep loved the crook as much as the staff, — to be guided,

as well as to be defended. Both of the shepherd's instruments were a great comfort to the sheep, while passing through a frightful and dangerous valley.

The interpretation usually given to the words, "thy rod and thy staff"—as though they meant "thy gentle reproofs and thy severe rebukes"—is erroneous. A sheep would hardly tell his shepherd that his chastising rod, and the heavy blows of his staff, comforted him. The meaning is, It is a comfort to me to feel the crook of thy rod helping me in trouble, and to know that thy staff is my defence against wild beasts.

THROUGH fear of death, many who are truly the followers of Christ, are, nevertheless, all their lifetime subject to bondage. On whatever mountains, into whatever pastures, and by whatever streams, their Shepherd leads them, they know that there is a valley into which they must go down, and the imagined

darkness and horrors of the place make them continually afraid.

A fear of death, without doubt, is frequently permitted, as a means of religious restraint. Some, who have wondered at this trial all their life long, find that its influence is great in keeping them near to the Shepherd and Bishop of their souls. If a flock could reason, no doubt the shepherd would make use of the fears of the sheep, in many instances, to keep them from going astray. If one of them were inclined to wander, it would be natural for the shepherd to caution that sheep against the dark valley, warning him of its terrors, and making him feel how necessary it would be to have a shepherd there, with his crook and staff. It may be that apprehensions with regard to death are the most powerful means, with some, of keeping them from going astray, and of holding their minds to the contemplation of spiritual things.

It has often been observed that those Christians whose fears of death were very great for

a large part of their life, frequently die with triumph. The reality is not such as they feared; they found support and consolation which they did not anticipate.

One of the most trying anticipations with regard to death, in the minds of many, long before the event arrives, is, separation from those whom we love. And yet, there is probably nothing in human experience more remarkable, than the singular resignation, and even cheerfulness, with which some, who have had every thing to make life desirable, have left all and followed Christ when he came to lead them through the valley. The young wife and mother, in her dying hours, becomes the comforter of her husband; she turns and looks at the infant who is held up to receive her farewell, and the mother alone is calm, sheds no tear, gives the farewell kiss with composure. "Thy rod" is supporting her; "thy staff" is keeping at bay the passions and fears of the natural heart. So a widowed mother leaves a large family of young children, with

a peace which passes all understanding. And the father of a dependent family, which never could, in a greater measure, need a father's presence, looks upon them from his dying bed, and says to them, with the serenity of the patriarch, "Behold, I die; but God shall be with you." Nothing is more true than this, that dying grace is for a dying hour; that is, we cannot, in health and strength, have the feelings which belong to the hour of parting; but as any and every scene and condition, into which God brings his children, has its peculiar frames of mind fitted to the necessity of each case, we need not make the useless effort to practise all the resignation, and experience all the comforts, which come only when they are actually needed. We do not often hear the first part of the following passage quoted; but in such rocky and thorny paths as we are often made to pass through, how good it is to read: "Thy shoes shall be iron and brass; and as thy days, so shall thy strength be." If God is our Shepherd, he will cause us to pass, one by one,

through the valley which is before us, leaving some most dear to us on the hither side. Suppose that when a shepherd is employed in removing his flock from one mountain to another, through a valley, one of the flock should mourn his separation from companions, or from its young. The shepherd would say, "You cannot all pass together; leave your companions and the young to me; I will restore them to you on the other side." He might also remonstrate and say, "Am I not, as their shepherd, interested in protecting and removing them? You can add nothing to my strength and wisdom; let me take you safely through the valley, and trust me to do the same for them."

The ancient shepherd was specially careful of the lambs; he carried them in his arms, and sometimes folded them beneath his shepherd's coat. We can imagine the feelings of some of a flock when, leaving them at a short distance, but within sight, the shepherd would take a lamb, carry it down into the valley, and dis-

appear with it for a little while. With all their confidence in their shepherd, some of the flock would manifest uneasiness at the separation, especially if the valley looked dark and dangerous. If it were the only lamb of its mother, it was natural for that mother to be distressed, and to lament. Though the young creature had gone safely to the other side, and was at play in the new pasture, and the mother believed it, this could not always quiet her. The good Shepherd has taken some of our lambs through the valley. They are safe upon the other side. They have joined the flock of Christ. Let us give our lambs to the Shepherd's care, to bear them through the valley, whenever he sees fit that they should be removed. We must all pass through that valley. If, from special love to our young, he will see them safely on the other side before he calls for us, we will intrust them to Him who claims our confidence by saying to us, I am the Good Shepherd. One of the prophecies concerning Christ reveals that tender love

and care, on his part, for children, which characterized him while on earth: "He shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom."

The fear of death is owing, in many cases, to the dread of dissolution.

The previous sickness prepares the soul and the body for their separation, so that, in very many cases, it is the greatest relief to die. We are, perhaps, mistaken if we suppose that those Christians who are in great bodily pain in their last hours, suffer in mind. The effects of death on the frame do not necessarily disturb the tranquillity of the soul. The body may be in spasms while the soul is at peace; and the reverse is true;—as in nightmare, when the mind is distressed while the body sleeps. A Christian has nothing to fear in this respect. To die will not be—as in full health we suppose it is—a violent rending asunder of the soul from the unyielding grasp of the body; but the preparation of the mortal frame for dissolution, by the sickness, however rapid, also fits the mind for

the event. Even in cases of death by accidents, this appears to be true.

But many feel that to die is to be transferred suddenly, and with violence, into strange scenes, which must overwhelm and distract the senses. It seems to them that it must be like being whirled instantly into a distant, unknown city, and waking up amidst the confusion and strangeness of that place. We cannot believe that such is the experience of dying Christians. It would rather seem that there is, at first, a perception of spiritual forms, of ministering spirits, whispering peace to the soul, and assuring it of safety, and bidding it fear not. It is said of angels, "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" When can we need their ministry more, than in the passage from this world to the world of spirits? Perhaps the disclosure is made of some departed friends; and the fancy of those who thought that they saw beloved ones beckoning them away, may

have had its foundation in truth. There is much of probability in that well-known piece, "The dying Christian's address to his soul;" — and no part of it is more probable than this:—

> "Hark! they whisper; angels say,
> Sister spirit, come away."

It is not improbable — it seems accordant with divine goodness — that such methods should be employed to relieve the anxiety of the departing spirit. Sometimes the dying Christian has declared that he heard enrapturing music. It is possible that voices were employed to soothe him to sleep, and to soften the transition, from the full consciousness of life, to the revelations of the heavenly world. Perhaps the effect of disease upon the organs of hearing was such as to produce something like sounds, which, in a joyous state of mind, were pleasurable. During the siege of Jerusalem in 1836, the wife of an American missionary sung while dissolution was actually taking place. The tones of her voice, they said, seemingly more than mortal, were far different from any

thing which they had ever heard, even from her. God is often pleased to use these natural effects of dissolution on the body, to comfort the passing spirit of his child. Whether visions or real voices are actually seen or heard, is of no consequence, so long as the soul has a rational and assured hope. Some means are unquestionably used in every case to make the dying believer feel that he is safe. He is not compelled to wait in uncertainty and fear for a moment. His fears are anticipated; he is among other friends, the moment that he grows insensible to those who watch his departing breath. Neither are we to suppose that heaven breaks upon the senses of the spirit with such an overpowering brightness, as to excite confusion and pain. No doubt the revelation is gradual and most pleasant. Perhaps the celestial city appears at first in the distance, having the glory of God most precious; the approach to it is gradual; voices are heard afar off, and from the convoy of ministering spirits, such information and instructions are

received as prepare it for the full vision of heaven. Every thing is calm and serene; the light is attempered to its new and feeble vision. He who makes the sun to rise by slow degrees, and does not pour straight, fierce rays upon the waking eyes even of sinful men, certainly will not torment the soul of his child with any such revelations of unseen things as will give pain. The same care which has redeemed and saved him, will order all these things in covenanted love.

Some of the preceding thoughts are well expressed in the following anonymous lines, written on seeing Mr. Greenough's group of the Angel and Child ascending to Heaven: —

"CHILD. Whither now wilt thou proceed?
ANGEL. Come up hither; I will show thee.
Follow me with joyful speed;
Leave thy native earth below thee.
CHILD. Stop! mine eyes cannot contain
Such a wondrous flood of light.
ANGEL. Come up hither. Thou shalt gain,
As thou risest, stronger sight.
CHILD. Lost in wonder without end,
Joyful, fearful, longing, shrinking,

Lead me, O thou heavenly friend;
Keep a trembling child from sinking.
O, I cannot bear this glory!
Angel brother! how canst thou?

ANGEL. I will tell thee all my story;
I was once as thou art now.

CHILD. When some sorrow did befall me,
Or I felt some strange alarms,
Then my mother's voice would call me,
To the shelter of her arms.
Now what bids my heart rejoice,
Clasped in arms I cannot see?
Hark, I hear a soothing voice
Sweetly whispering, Come to me.

ANGEL. Yes, it calls thee from on high;
Come to God's most holy mountain;
Thou hast drunk the stream of life; —
I will lead thee to the fountain."

Some dread the thought of being out of the body and finding themselves spirits. This is wholly without reason. The soul will not suffer from losing this body of sin and death; it will have as perfect a consciousness, it will know where it is, and what is passing before it, as seems to be the case in a vivid dream when the bodily senses are locked in slumber.

As to the natural repugnance which we have to the thoughts of burial and the grave, it is probable that the soul of a redeemed spirit thinks and cares as little concerning these things, so far as painful sensations are concerned, as we do about our garments when we are falling asleep. The vesture which we formerly wore gives us no solicitude. It is wonderful to hear the sick, long before they die, give directions, or express desires, respecting their burial. So far from thinking of the grave as a melancholy place, no doubt the departed spirit will often think of it in the separate state with pleasure, as the place where it is hereafter to receive a form like Christ's; and the thought of resurrection adds greatly to the joys of heaven.

There is something still which affects the minds of many Christians with fear as they think of dying; and that is, their appearing before God. They cannot imagine the possibility of seeing him without distraction; his

infinite majesty, and their own sense of unworthiness, make them afraid.

But who is God? Is he the Christian's enemy? Will he sit like a king on his throne, and see his subject come trembling into his presence? Is this the God who loved him? Is this the Saviour that died for him? Is this the Holy Spirit who awakened, converted, sanctified, comforted him, and promised to present him faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy? God will not have done so much to bring him to heaven, and, when he comes there, make his appearance before his throne a matter of fear and uncertainty. He who fell on the neck of the returning prodigal and kissed him, will not keep him at a distance when, with the best robe, and the ring, and the shoes, he comes into his father's house. Our first apprehensions of God will be happy beyond our present comprehension. What an image have we, in these words, of a man helping a child, by the hand, through a dangerous or dark way: "For I the Lord

thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not; I will help thee." If "I will be with thee," is the reason which he himself assigns why we should not be afraid, why should we fear to come into his presence?

As to a consciousness of guilt, there is no doubt that he who falls asleep in Jesus, with reliance on his blood and righteousness, will immediately, at death, receive such a consciousness of being purified from all taint of sin, as now is beyond our conception. In the language of Scripture, we shall be presented faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy. For the sake of Christ, in whom we trust, we shall be received and treated as though we had never sinned; we shall say, in the full assurance of pardon, righteousness, and peace with God, without waiting for the question to be asked in our behalf, "Who is he that condemneth?" "It is Christ that died."

And if this be so, as it surely is, why may not Christians in this world before they die,

nay, from the first hour of justification by faith in Christ, triumph thus in him? Why should their remaining sinfulness, their poor, frail, erring nature, which they must carry with them to the grave, prevent them from having the same joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom also we have received the atonement? Every true believer in Jesus Christ is warranted in having the same consciousness of pardon and peace with God, now, as after death; the justifying righteousness of Christ is as powerful now as it will be then. Some tell us, "Live a sinless life, and you may have this perfect peace." That is self-righteousness. It will not be a sinless life which, in the moment after death, will make us to be openly acknowledged and acquitted; it will be the righteousness of Jesus Christ which is by faith; and he who has faith in that righteousness may, living as well as dying, here as well as in heaven, say, 'There is, therefore, *now* no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit.'

There are several things which may reconcile us to the thought of dying:

All the people of God since the creation, with two exceptions, have died. Of the two who were excepted, neither of them was his only begotten Son. Those whom God has loved peculiarly have not been exempted from the stroke of death. Shall we ask exemption from that which all the good and great have suffered? Let me die the death of the righteous. If he must find the grave, there will I be buried. We would not go to heaven but in the way which prophets, apostles, martyrs trod. The footsteps of the flock lead through the valley; we will seek no other, no easier, way.

Surely we should be willing to follow our great Forerunner. He tasted death for every man; and he could enter into his triumph only by dying. We should be more than resigned to follow our blessed Lord into the tomb. Christ conquered death by dying; we shall be

more than conquerors in the same way. If we suffer great pain, we cannot suffer more than Christ suffered on our account. Sufferings borne in the spirit of Christ are counted as sufferings borne for Christ. "If we suffer, we shall also reign with him." "If so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together."

Death is a part of the penalty of sin. We should, therefore, submit to it, giving up our bodies to be destroyed, in fulfilment of that sentence which we have so justly incurred — "and unto dust shalt thou return." He who hates sin, and condemns himself for it, and is willing to have fellowship with Christ in his sufferings for it, as it is most graciously represented that we may, will bear the execution of God's righteous sentence with a willing mind.

Death is the perfecting of our redemption. It is the last act of redeeming grace. When the Saviour, who says, "I have the keys of —

death," (i. e., no one can die but at the time and manner prescribed by me,) takes us out of the world, it is to finish the work of our personal salvation. All the circumstances attending it will be as deliberately appointed, and as carefully watched and directed, as the first great act of grace towards us in our regeneration. He, too, who has provided such pastures and streams for us here, in removing us to living pastures and to living streams, will, of course, see that we go safely through the valley which must be passed to reach them. It will not be a new thing to Christ to see us die. He has watched the dying beds of millions of his friends, he has had great experience as a Shepherd in bringing them through the valley.

See that chamber in yonder mansion, where all the comforts, and some of the luxuries, of life, have contributed to prepare for some mysterious event. The garden of Eden failed to possess such joys as are there in anticipation, and are soon to be made perfect. Every thing

seems waiting, with silent but thrilling interest, for the arrival of an unknown occupant. And there is raiment of needle-work, and of fine twined linen, and gifts of cunning device, from the looms of the old world, and from graceful fingers and loving hearts here, every want being anticipated, and some wants imagined, to gratify the love of satisfying them. And now God breathes the breath of life, and a living soul begins its deathless career, amidst joys and thanksgivings, which swell through the wide circles of kindred and acquaintance-ship. The Holy Spirit, in the process of time, renews and sanctifies the soul through the blood of the everlasting covenant; and having, through life, walked with God, the day arrives when the spirit must return to God who gave it. You saw how it was received here, at its entrance into the world. You have seen what the atonement, and regeneration, and sanctification, and providence, and grace, have done for it, and with what accumulated love the Father of Spirits, and Redeemer, and

Sanctifier, must regard it. And now do we suppose that the shroud, and coffin, and the funeral, and the narrow house, and the darkness, and the solitude and corruption, and the whole dreary and terrible train of death and the grave, are symbols of its reception into heaven, the proper pageantry of its arrival and resting place within the veil? Believe it not! If God prepared in our hearts such a welcome for the infant stranger, that even its helpless feet were thought of and cared for, surely when those feet, wearied in the pilgrimage of the strait and narrow way, arrive at heaven's gate, it must be, it is, amidst rejoicings and ministrations of love to which earth has no parallel. Let kings and queens prepare a royal room for the new-born prince: "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."

Could we look into that place, as it stands waiting for its occupant from earth, we should behold sights which would instantly clothe even death with beauty, and make it seem now, as it will seem then, a blessed thing to die.

To miss of dying would no doubt be a calamity. Dying will be an experience to the believer which will be fraught with inestimably good things; that is, the act of dying, and not merely the being dead. It is no doubt as necessary to the nature of the soul, to its psychology, its soul-life, as the changes of the worm, chrysalis, and butterfly, are to the insect. And thus, as in all other things, where sin abounded, grace much more abounds, and even death, like a cross, is turned into a ministration of infinite blessing.

It is not unsuitable for a dying Christian to consider, that he is compassed about with a great cloud of witnesses, who themselves have died, and who are watching his departure.

We ought to die with such faith in Jesus, such confidence in God, such confident expectation and hope, that they will rejoice to see us conquer death. Our last conflict should be fought in a manner worthy of the company and scenes into which we are immediately to pass.

We should not anxiously seek to remove entirely from any one, in the course of his life, his fears with regard to death, except as we may substitute faith for those fears. God probably intends them now for the increase of faith. Moreover, when the event of death happens, it will be mingled with so much mercy as to make the Christian smile at his fears. The exhortation of the apostle in view of his great discourse of death and resurrection is noticeable: "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord; forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."

There are cases in which the clouded fac-

ulties, or delirium, prevent the full enjoyment of a peaceful, happy death. Such cases seem painful to friends, but the Shepherd knows when it is best to hide the face of a sheep which he carries through the valley, and that it is sometimes better for the sheep to pass the valley in the black and dark night, than when daylight, by revealing the horrors of the place, would excite fear. All this may safely be left to those hands which spoiled death of his sting, and to that love which is stronger than death. Wherever, and whenever, and in whatever manner we may die, it will be under the care and direction of Him who will no more see us in the power of the enemy, than a strong and faithful shepherd would suffer a beloved member of his flock to fall into the power of the lion.

The last lines of a hymn by Doddridge —

> "Then speechless clasp thee in my arms,
> The antidote of death" —

are altered, by some compilers, who substitute

the word *conqueror* for *antidote*. But the author saw the truthfulness of his own chosen language, though the word in question be not convenient for musical expression. When we are already stung by a poisonous creature, we take something which proves an antidote to the effect of the sting. This medicine is not so much a conqueror, as an antidote; for the poison is not developed. But the sting is inflicted, and before the poisonous injury is felt, the antidote prevents it. These words of Christ correspond to this: "Verily, verily I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death." How often we behold this verified! The spectators "see death," in his approach, in his effects; they weep and tremble, while the dear patient does not "see" it; for something else absorbs his thoughts, fixes his attention; he is stung, indeed, by the monster; but Christ is an antidote to death, causes it to pass by without inflicting pain upon the mind, or in any way hurting its victim. Dr. Watts illustrates and confirms all this: —

"Jesus, the vision of thy face
Hath overpowering charms;
Scarce shall I feel death's cold embrace,
If Christ be in my arms."

The piece of paper which would suffice to write the twenty-third Psalm upon it, would not be large enough for a common title deed; and yet that Psalm, if it expresses our experience, is worth infinitely more than is conveyed, or secured, by all the registries of deeds under the sun. We are each of us to see a time when we shall feel the truth of this. If but these first few words of the Psalm are true in my case, if "the Lord is my Shepherd," all the rest of the Psalm is a record, a promise, a pledge, of past, present, and future good.

There are six things declared by Christ to be characteristic of the relation which he and his people sustain to each other, as Shepherd and the sheep:

1. "My sheep hear my voice;
2. And I know them;
3. And they follow me;

4. And I give unto them eternal life;

5. And they shall never perish;

6. Neither shall any pluck them out of my hand."

Here we find directions to duty, as well as promises of future good.

Since it is more important how we live than how we die, and since death is merely the arrival at the end of a journey, the beginning, progress, and history of the journey determining what the arrival is to be, we shall do well to dismiss our borrowed trouble with regard to the manner of our departure out of the world, and be solicitous only with regard to the right discharge of present duty. We read, "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints." The death of every child of his is, with God, an object of unspeakable interest; his own honor is concerned in it; its influence on survivors is of great importance; it will be among the means by which God accomplishes several, it may be many, purposes of providence, but especially of his grace. "No man

dieth to himself." Great interests are involved in his death, beyond his own personal welfare. Now, if we have lived for God, he will make our death the object of his especial care, and will honor it by its being the means of promoting his glory. Instead, therefore, of gloomy apprehensions as to dying, we should cherish the noble wish and aim that Christ may be magnified in our body, whether it be by life or by death. If our life has been a walking with God, "THOU ART WITH ME" will be a perfect warrant, now, and in death, to "FEAR NO EVIL."

III.

THE SEARCH FOR THE DEPARTED.

No bliss mid worldly crowds is bred,
Like musing on the sainted dead.

BISHOP MANT.

WE seek in vain, on earth, for one who has gone to heaven. Though better informed as to the objects of our love than they who lingered about the deserted tomb of the Saviour, and were asked, "Why seek ye the living among the dead," we nevertheless find ourselves, in our thoughts, searching for them; so difficult is it at once to feel that they are wholly and forever departed. There is an affecting and beautifully simple illustration of our thoughts and feelings, in this respect, in the search which was made for Elijah after his translation. Fifty men of the sons of the prophets went and stood to view afar off, when

Elijah and Elisha stood by the Jordan. Elisha returned alone, and these men could not feel reconciled to the loss of their great master. They were not persuaded that he had gone to heaven, no more to return; they sought leave to seek him, and to recover him: "Peradventure," they said, "the Spirit of the Lord hath taken him up, and cast him upon some mountain, or into some valley." Elisha peremptorily refused to grant them leave. They were importunate; and when, at last, it would, perhaps, seem like obstinacy in him, or like jealousy of their superior love for Elijah, to forbid the search, which at the worst would only be fruitless, he yielded. Three days they explored the valleys, ransacked the thickets, groped in the caves, traversed hills, followed imaginary trails and footprints, but found him not. When they came again to Elisha, "he said unto them, Did I not say unto you, Go not?"

We cannot become accustomed at once, nor for a long time, to the absence of our friend.

If his death was sudden, or if it took place away from home, or during our absence, we expect to see him again; if a vehicle stops at the door, the heart beats with an instantaneous hope which dies with its first breath, bringing over us a deeper and stronger refluence of sorrow. We catch a sight of articles familiarly used by a departed friend; they are identified with little passages in his history, or with his daily life: is it possible that he is altogether and forever disconnected from them? They are the same; those perishable things, those comparatively worthless things, having no value at all except as his use of them made them precious, retain their shapes and places; but where is he? and must not he return and abide, like them?

No, he is gone to heaven. The places which knew him shall know him no more forever. Those things, which have an imperishable value in being associated with his memory, are, to him, like the leaves of a past autumn to a tree now filled with blossoms. The men-

tion of every valued possession once indescribably dear to him, would awaken but slight emotions; even the recent history of the dwelling which he built and furnished, would be no more to him than the rehearsal to a grown person of that which had happened to a block house, or card figure, which amused his childhood. We walk and sit in the places identified with our last remembrances of the departed; but he is not there; we hallow the anniversaries of his birth and death; but he gives us no recognition; we read his letters; they make him seem alive; his voice, his smile, his love are there; and when we have finished, nature, exhausted with its weeping, sighs, "And where is he?"

He is gone to heaven. Even the earthly house of his tabernacle is dissolved; that part of him which was all of which we were cognizant by our senses, is no more. We could not recognize it; to the earth, out of which it was taken, it has, by slow degrees, returned, — as though every thing earthly, belonging to him,

'must needs die, and be as water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again.' We travel to his birthplace; there is the house where he was born; we meet those who grew with him side by side; we are among the scenes which were most familiar to him; he planted those trees; he collected those pictures; there is his portrait, he rested here, he studied, he worked, he rejoiced, he wept, in these consecrated places; but did we go thinking to find him there? "Did I not say unto you, Go not?"

We shall surely make him real to our thoughts, if not to our senses, where he lies buried. But we may as well stand upon the sea shore, where we had the last look of a seafaring friend, and think that those waters, and those sands, and that horizon, will restore him. They only serve to open farther the path of his departure; they lead our thoughts away to dwell upon him where we imagine him to be. Nowhere does heaven seem more real than at the grave of a friend; for we know that he

has not perished, and as we stand on that verge of all our fruitless search and expectation, we are compelled to fix him somewhere in our thoughts; but as he is nowhere behind us, we look onward and upward.

Our desire for departed friends, however natural and innocent, if it resulted as we sometimes would have it, would prove to be unwise.

Suppose that those "fifty strong men" had found Elijah, or in any way could have prevented his translation to heaven. With exultation, they would have led him back across the Jordan to the company of their friends, amidst the thanksgivings of the people. But, alas! for the prophet himself, this would have been his loss, even had it proved to be their gain. The opening Jordan, cleft in twain by his rapt spirit, pressing its way to the skies, had returned to its course; and now the fords of the river, with its rocky bed, would have required his laboring feet to grope their way back to his toil; or the arms of men, instead of the

chariots of fire and horses of fire, would have borne him again to the dull realities of life; and there, rebuking Ahab, and fleeing from Jezebel, punishing the prophets of Baal, and upbraiding the people of God in their idolatries, fasting and faint under junipers, or covering his face with his mantle at the still small voice of the Lord his God, he would again have prayed, "O Lord God, take away my life, for I am no better than my fathers." 'Let me not wait longer for my promised translation; let me die as my fathers did; for wherein am I better than they?' So weary had he grown of life. Blind and weak do these fifty strong men seem to us, in searching for this ascended prophet, this traveller over the King's road in royal state, one of the only two who might not taste of death; the companion, in heaven, of Enoch, with a body which fills all the ransomed spirits there with joyful expectation, because it is a pledge and earnest of "the adoption, to wit, the redemption of their bodies." If, amid the new wonders and raptures of the

heavenly world, he had had one moment to look down upon those "fifty strong men," as they searched for him, he might well have used, in cheerful irony, something like his old upbraidings of the priests near Baal's altar: "Search deeper, ye 'strong men,' in the thickets and caves; peradventure I sleep in the brakes, and must be awaked; call, with your fifty voices together, that I may be startled from my trance; will ye give over till ye bring me back to Jericho? Will ye search but three days? Shall I lose the remnant of my life on earth?"

And while they grew weary and discouraged, and concluded that, if he should be found, it might be in the far distant hills of Moab, or the wilds of Philistia, or they knew not where, and went back with hearts unsatisfied, and debating whether he were yet a wanderer upon earth, or whether so impossible a thing as they deemed his translation to heaven, without dying, had taken place, the glorified Elijah was with Abraham, Isaac, and

Jacob, with Moses, Joshua, Samuel, and David. But even Solomon, in all his glory, was not arrayed like him. There, with a body like unto Christ's own future glorious body, he sat, with but one compeer — Enoch, and he, transcending all the hosts of the redeemed in the foretasted glories of the resurrection. Adam, by whom came death, sees in him that which he himself is to share, when by one Man, also, shall come the resurrection from the dead. Abel, whose feet first trod the dark, cold stream, leaving his murdered body behind him, beholds with love and wonder him who passed the river of death ("that ancient river!") without dying. Even the Word beholds in him an earnest of his own incarnation, resurrection, and ascension from Olivet. To-day, our loved ones in heaven look upon him, and say, as Peter did at this prophet's visit on Tabor, (when he spoke of tabernacles there — "one for Elias,") "Master, it is good for us to be here." But we, like the "fifty strong men," would find them and bring them back; and, like

Peter, would build tabernacles to retain them. The family circle is gathered together at some birthday or festival, and, perhaps, we long for the departed, and think that they long for us; and we would bring them back, and place them in their deserted chairs. We are "strong men" in the power of grief, and in our wishes; but the search for Elijah is the counterpart of our vain desires and most unreasonable sorrow.

When our friends have gone to heaven, it is not apt to be heaven, so much as earthly sorrow, which fills our minds. Happily, we have been taught to believe, and we do generally believe, that the souls of the righteous enter immediately into glory; that their happiness is perfect, though not completed; they are as happy as disembodied spirits can be; unspeakably happier than they were here, but still not in full possession of those sources of pleasure which they will receive when their bodies are raised, and their whole natures are made complete. But "to die is gain;" it is "to depart

and to be with Christ, which is far better;" it is entering "into the joy of their Lord." That dreary thought of sleeping after death till the day of judgment; the idea that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, became insensible at death, and that the last thing which Jacob, for example, knew, was Joseph's kiss, and the next thing which he will know will be the archangel's trump, the interval of many thousands of years being a perfect blank in his existence, is so unlike the benevolent order of God's providence in nature and grace, that it cannot gain much credence with believers in the simple representations of the Bible. What a mockery Elijah's translation seems, upon that theory! Whither was he translated? Did the chariots of fire, and the horses of fire, convey him to a dreamless sleep of thousands of years? Was that pomp, that emblazonry, all that fiery pageant, a deception signifying nothing but that the greatest of prophets was to begin a stupid slumber, which, this day, under a heaven with not one redeemed soul in it, and

in a world where there is every thing to be done for God and men, holds him, and every other dead saint, in a useless suspension of his consciousness, and, indeed, for so many ages, annihilation? Poor economy in the dispensation of overflowing love to intelligent beings,—we say it with submission,—does this seem to be; nor can we think that, in the case of Elijah, it was this which was heralded by horses and chariots of fire. Chariots and horses are emblems of flight; but if sleep were descending upon the hero of the prophetic age, twilight would more appropriately have drawn her soft veil over nature, birds would have begun their vespers, clouds would have put on their changing, pensive colors, while cadences of music, breathed by the winds, would have shed lethargic influences into the scene. Inspiration does not trifle with us by really meaning such a preparation for a sleep of ages, and yet informing us, in so many words, that "the Lord would take up Elijah into heaven by a whirlwind." No; going to heaven is not going to sleep, and

going to sleep is not going to heaven. Sleep and death are used figuratively for each other, according to the laws of language, which describes appearances without regard to scientific truth, as in speaking of the sun's rising, for example, and the going down of the sun; but to fall asleep in Jesus is to awake in heaven; to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord. This we all believe; and may we never be moved away from this cheering, animating hope. Yet how little power has this belief and hope upon our feelings and conduct! for our Christian graces partake of the same imperfection which characterizes our whole nature; the soil is poor in which they grow; the seasons are short, the climate cold; they do not reach maturity. It is instructive to notice how men who have had the very best advantages, and the greatest knowledge, are, nevertheless, prone to unbelief. Christ appeared to his disciples, and upbraided them because they believed not them which said he was risen. Their incredulity strikes us as mar-

vellous. They were not the first, nor the last, whose want of faith is a marvel. These sons of the prophets in Elisha's day were equally slow to believe. They themselves had said to him, "Knowest thou that the Lord will take away thy master from thy head to-day?" Elisha came back to them from the scene of the translation. Of course he told them what had happened, describing minutely the whole of that preternatural scene; he probably related the conversation which Elijah had with him as they walked; and this inspired companion of the departed prophet, having himself no doubt that Elijah had gone to heaven, so instructed these sons of the prophets. But how hard it is for the things which are unseen and eternal to seize and hold our minds! how readily we yield to surmises, rather than admit the clear disclosures of spiritual things! Straightway these sons of the prophets, who should have retired each to his secret place, for contemplation and prayer, and, in the solemn assembly, should have directed the thoughts of each

other and of the people to the instructive lessons suggested by the departure of Elijah to heaven, were making up an exploring party, to prove that their illustrious chief had met with some disaster in being left forlorn upon some mountain, or in a valley; that the spirit of God had entranced him, and that his weary feet, instead of treading the pavement of heaven, were ensnared in some dark place; and so, in pity for him, and with filial love, they would seek him, and bring him back to Jericho!

If we had clear and strong faith, our joy at the thought of a glorified spirit, however necessary its presence to us here, would transcend all our sorrows; the streaming beams of sunshine would irradiate our weeping; we should think more of his happiness than of our discomfort. Instead of departed spirits falling asleep, it is we who have a spirit of slumber. O that we might walk by faith with glorified spirits before the throne, instead of remanding them, — as it seems we sometimes

would do, if we could,— to the ignorance and infirmity of our condition.

Our feelings towards the departed are the same as towards other prohibited things. Many are continually seeking for pleasures which God has taken away, or is purposely withholding from them. Let any one look at the history of his feelings, and see if his state of mind be not one of perpetual expectation of some form of happiness yet to arrive; an ideal of bliss, some prefigured condition, in which contentment and peace are to abide; while the discovery that he is not to have it, would make him inconsolably miserable. Our search for lost joys, or for those which God is not prepared, or not disposed, to give us, and the happiness which he desires rather to give us, and to have us seek, are severally represented to us by this search for Elijah, and by Elijah himself, who is, meanwhile, at God's right hand. At his right hand are pleasures forevermore; but some, in the ardor and strength of their affections, are seeking for that which

they will never obtain, and that is, happiness independent of God. Some tell us that they mean to make the most of life, and to be happy while they live; therefore, begone, reflection! religion is not for the spring-tide of youth; mirth and merry days are for the young; soberness and the russet garb of autumn belong to the decline of life, which certainly to them, they think, is far off; — as though every material necessary for their last, long sleep, may not at this moment be in the warerooms and shops; as though they could boast themselves even of one to-morrow, and knew what the to-morrows of many years would bring forth. The Bible is against their way of thinking and manner of life; and to push aside the Bible in our search after any thing, is a certain sign of being in the wrong. And all this with the mistaken belief that to love God, and to be loved of him, is not the greatest, the only satisfying good, — the God that framed the voice for that music which charms a circle of friends, and made those

curious fingers, and gave them all that cunning skill which sheds delight on others, and empowered that heart to swell with such conceptions of earthly pleasure; — and that to love him, and be loved by him, is the direst necessity of our being, to be postponed as long as possible, and then to be accepted as a last resort and the less of two evils. Where is the Lord God of Elijah, the God of all power and might, the God of all grace and consolation, the God of our life, and the length of our days? Banished from the world which these friends have made for themselves; an intruder into the charmed circle in which the wand of fancy has enclosed them; a dreaded power standing over them, to snatch away the only bliss which they ever expect to enjoy. O gilded butterflies, made for a few days of sunshine, and doomed to perish at the first touch of frost! had they no souls; were there no hereafter, no heaven, no hell; if it would not be as desirable to be happy millions of years from to-day, as now; if they were not

including all their hopes and efforts to be happy within a handbreadth of time, and liable to lose even that, — the wise man might stop with saying, "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes;" but the infinite future compels him to add, "but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment." Such are the motives by which, in their present condition, and with their present views, they are most likely to be affected; yet some of them, we are glad to say, in their best moods, are also affected and influenced aright when we tell them that, even if our existence terminated at death, the joys which are now to be found in loving and serving God, are better than the pleasures of sin for a season.

There is not one of us who has not lost a friend, a schoolmate, a companion of early life, one who has disappeared from our side, a frequent associate in the business of life, or one

whom we have been accustomed to see in the places of business; and perhaps a member of our family circle.

Now, it is profitable to consider that the same thoughts which we have of them, others will ere long have concerning us. What would make us satisfied and happy to know respecting them? What are we glad to say of their preparation for an eternal state? What would we have had that preparation be? In what respects better or different? Where do we love to assign them their places? And what is it pleasant to believe are their thoughts of us, of earth, of eternity, of the gospel, of this life as a season of preparation for heaven? We shall soon be the subjects of the same contemplations in the minds of others. The hosts of that long procession, of which we are the part now passing over the stage, are urging and pressing us from behind, and we must go down, as others have before us, — our love, our envy, our hatred perish, — and we no more have any portion in all that is done under the sun.

We must give up happiness as the great aim and end of existence, and, instead of it, take this for our supreme endeavor and chief end — the conscientious performance of our duty to God, and to others. We are never really happy till we cease to expect happiness from the things of this world. As soon as we begin to be satisfied with God, and find that to think of God, to love him, to trust in him, to serve him, is happiness enough, we attain to solid peace; and then, turning and following the sun, all desirable pleasure pursues us and solicits us, like our shadows, the more eagerly and steadily the more that we flee from them, and the less that we turn ourselves to them. We never can be happy by searching for happiness; but when we give up this search, and duty becomes the motto of life, we are inevitably happy. God must satisfy us — his personal love to us, communion with him, the contemplation of his character, ways, and works; in short, the consciousness of having him for a personal friend, disclosing all

our thoughts to him, looking to him and waiting for him in all things, and, as the Bible expresses it, "walking" with him. Then he makes our wants his care; and while he leads us through strange paths which we should not have chosen, it is to bring us, at the last, into a condition which will make us happy chiefly from the reflection that God himself appointed it. Disappointments, of which we were forewarned, and which we had every reason to expect, embitter that life whose only sources of happiness are confined to this world, and do not relate to God. Making him the supreme source of our happiness, we give up undue sorrow for departed friends, feeling that they are removed from all need of our commiseration, and all power to afford us comfort and help, any further than their example and remembered words instruct us. We shall then be chiefly concerned to know and to do the will of God, to watch over the interests of our souls, preparing for life, with its important duties, and storing up those recollections which

are to occupy our thoughts in the review of life beyond the grave. We shall bear in mind that we, too, are to have survivors, to whom it will be the greatest favor if we leave a good assurance, based upon their remembrance of our piety, that we are happy, thus constraining them to follow us to heaven. We shall do well if we habitually say, as Elijah said to Elisha, "The Lord hath sent me to Jordan;" and that we are one day to be taken up and conveyed to that same heaven whither Elijah went, and from which he came to meet Christ, and to speak with him of his decease, which he should accomplish at Jerusalem. What if we knew that some day, not far distant, flaming chariots and horses, over our dwelling, would wait to bring us home to God? The ministering spirits are already designated who are to perform this office for those who are heirs of salvation. What, then, are we searching for among the dark, gloomy valleys of sorrow, or on the hills of earthly vision? If our friends are with Christ, we must be pre-

pared to be with him, or lose their society; and that loss will be worse than the first.

Sometimes we feel as though we were sailing away from our departed friends, leaving them behind us. Not so; we are sailing towards them; they went forward, and we are nearer to them now than yesterday; and the night is far spent; the day is at hand. If life, or any undue portion, be spent in grief which unfits us for duty, we shall see, in heaven, how much better it would have been had we had more faith, and had lived more as then we should desire our surviving friends to live, quickened and strengthened by the assured hope of our being in heaven, and by the expectation of meeting us there.

But there is one kind of sorrow and desire for departed friends which, in its consequences, is greatly to be deplored. Some refuse to become decided Christians, because their friends, they think, were not believers in the faith which these surviving friends are now persuaded is the truth. To embrace this truth, as

essential to salvation, it is felt, will be to condemn these departed friends; and some have, in so many words, declared that they preferred to share the fate of their companions, or children, who gave no evidence of having accepted the gospel, as it is now viewed by these survivors.

How sad would be such a catastrophe as this: The departed friend, in the secret exercises of his mind, and by the good Spirit of God, may have been, at the last hour, prevailed upon to accept the offers of salvation by a crucified Redeemer. He gave no intimation of this, owing, perhaps, to bodily weakness, or to fear and distrust; but, through infinite mercy, he was saved by faith in the Lamb of God. The surviving friend, persuaded of the truth, refuses to comply with it, and loves the departed friend more than Christ, or truth and duty; and then, dying, finds that the departed friend is saved, through that very faith, which the other refused from idolatrous attachment to the departed; and

now they are separated; whereas, had the survivor forsaken all for Christ and the truth, he would have had a hundred fold in this world, and, in the world to come, would have found that friend whom he would, as it were, have forsaken for Christ's sake and the gospel's. It is safe, it is best, for each of us to do his duty, to walk by the light afforded us, and not to make a creature our standard, nor our chief good.

If we meet certain of our friends at the end of their search after pleasure, having forgotten their God and Saviour, and see them disappointed, and utterly destitute of any thing to make them happy forever, and all because they would not forego their chase after unsatisfying pleasure,—there is many a faithful Christian friend, whose example and advice they disregarded, who could then reply, "Did I not say unto you, Go not?"

In the name of some unspeakably dear to you, we say, "We are journeying unto the place of which the Lord said, I will give it you; come thou with us, and we will do thee

good; for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel."

Our friends, who have gone to heaven, ought not to be invested, in our thoughts, with such melancholy associations as we are prone to connect with them. To die is gain. Trouble, and sorrow, and the dark river, interpose between us and heaven; but in the prospect which has opened before the eye of the redeemed spirit, there is nothing but widening and brightening glory. We must not seek for consolation at their departure by bringing them back, in our thoughts, to our dwellings, but by going forward, in faith, ourselves, to their dwelling. There is much to encourage and help us in doing so, in the following lines, which may be read with profit upon each anniversary of a friend's departure to heaven, until surviving friends read them at the returning anniversaries of our own entrance into the joy of our Lord:—

"A Year in Heaven.

A year uncalendared; for what
Hast thou to do with mortal time?
Its dole of moments entereth not
That circle, mystic and sublime,
Whose unreached centre is the throne
Of Him, before whose awful brow,
Meeting eternities are known
As but an everlasting now.
The thought removes thee far away, —
Too far, — beyond my love and tears;
Ah, let me hold thee, as I may;
And count thy time by earthly years.

A year of blessedness; wherein
Not one dim cloud hath crossed thy soul;
No sigh of grief, no touch of sin,
No frail mortality's control;
Nor once hath disappointment stung,
Nor care, world-weary, made thee pine;
But rapture, such as human tongue
Hath found no language for, is thine.
Made perfect at thy passing, who
Can sum thy added glory now?
As on, and onward, upward, through
The angel ranks that lowly bow,
Ascending still from height to height
Unfaltering, where rapt spirits trod,
Nor pausing 'mid their circles bright,
Thou tendest inward unto God.

A YEAR OF PROGRESS, in the lore
That's only learned in heaven; thy mind
Unclogged of clay, and free to soar,
Hath left the realms of doubt behind,
And wondrous things which finite thought
In vain essayed to solve, appear
To thy untasked inquiries, fraught
With explanation strangely clear.
Thy reason owns no forced control,
As held it here in needful thrall;
God's mysteries court thy questioning soul,
And thou may'st search and know them all.

A YEAR OF LOVE; thy yearning heart
Was always tender, e'en to tears,
With sympathies, whose sacred art
Made holy all thy cherished years;
But love, whose speechless ecstasy
Had overborne the finite, now
Throbs through thy being, pure and free,
And burns upon thy radiant brow.
For thou those hands' dear clasp hast felt,
Where still the nail-prints are displayed;
And thou before that face hast knelt,
Which wears the scars the thorns have made.

A YEAR WITHOUT THEE; I had thought
My orphaned heart would break and die,
Ere time had meek quiescence brought,
Or soothed the tears it could not dry;

And yet I live, to faint and quail
  Before the human grief I bear;
To miss thee so, then drown the wail
  That trembles on my lips in prayer.
Thou praising, while I vainly thrill;
  Thou glorying, while I weakly pine;
  And thus between thy heart and mine
The distance ever widening still.

A YEAR OF TEARS TO ME; to thee
  The end of thy probation's strife,
The archway to eternity,
  The portal of immortal life;
To me the pall, the bier, the sod;
  To thee the palm of victory given.
Enough, my heart; thank God! thank God!
  That thou hast been a year in heaven.

IV.

THE SILENCE OF THE DEAD.

Dear, beauteous Death, the jewel of the just,
  Shining nowhere but in the dark,
What mysteries do lie beyond thy dust,
  Could men outlook that mark!
He that hath found some fledged bird's nest, may know,
  At first sight, if the bird be flown;
But what fair field, or grove, he sings in now,
  That is to him unknown.

HENRY VAUGHAN.

THE silence of the dead is one of the most impressive and affecting things connected with the separate state of the soul. We hear the voice of a dying friend, in some last wish, or charge, or prayer, or farewell, or in some exclamation of joy or hope; and though years are multiplied over the dead, that voice returns no more in any moment of day or night, of joy or sorrow, of labor or rest, in life or in death.

The voices of creation return to us at periodical seasons. The early spring bird startles us with her unexpected note; the winter is over and gone. But no periodical change brings back the voices of departed friends. A member of the family embarks on a long voyage; but, be it ever so long, if life is spared, the letter is received, in which the written words, so characteristic of him, recall his looks and the tones of his voice. Years pass away, and the sound of his footsteps is at the door again, and his voice is heard in the dwelling. But of the dead there comes no news; from the grave no voice, from the separate state no message. With our desire to speak once more to the departed, and to hear them speak, we feel that they must have an intense desire to speak to us. We wonder why they do not break the silence. There is so much of which they could inform us; it would be such a relief, we think, to have one word from them, assuring us that they arrived safely, and are happy, and, above all things, granting us their

forgiveness for the sins which now have awakened sorrow. But we wait, and look, and wonder, in vain.

When we think of the number of the dead, this silence appears impressive. Their number far exceeds that of the living. Could they be assembled together, and could those now alive be set over against them, upon an immense plain, to a spectator from above we should be a small company in comparison with them. Should they lift up their voices together, ours could not be heard. Yet from that vast multitude we never hear a voice, — not even a whisper, — nor see a sign. Standing in a cemetery a few miles distant from the great city, you hear the low, muffled roar from the streets and bridges, reminding you of the living tide which is coursing along those highways. But with eight thousand of the dead around you in that cemetery, and a world of spirits, which no man can number, just within the veil, you hear nothing from them. No one comes back to tell us of his experience; no warning, nor

comfort, nor counsel, ever reaches our ears. Whatever our trouble, or our joy may be, our need or prosperity; however long and painful the absence of the departed may have been; however lonely we may feel, wishing for some word of remembrance and love; and though we visit the grave day by day, and call on the name of the departed, and use every art of endearment to pierce the veil between us, —there is the same determined, cold, lasting silence. "To go down into silence" is a scriptural phrase for the state of the dead.

Our feelings seek relief from those vague, uncertain thoughts respecting the dead which we find occasioned by the gentle manner in which death most frequently occurs. The breath is shorter and shorter, and finally ceases, yet so imperceptibly, that, for a moment, it is uncertain whether the last breath has expired. There is no visible trace of the outgoing of the soul. Could we see the spirit leave the body, we should feel that one of the mysteries of death is solved. Could we trace its flight

into the air, could we watch its form as it disappeared among the clouds, or melted away in a distance greater than the eye can comprehend, we should not, perhaps, ask for a word to assure us respecting the state of the soul. But there is no more perfect delineation of the appearances which death presents to us, than in the following inspired description: "As the waters fail from the sea, and the flood decayeth and drieth up, so man lieth down and riseth not; till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep." We see the lying down, the fixedness of the posture, the utter disregard, in the cold remains, of every thing which passes before them; and these remains are like the channels of a river, or the flats of the sea, when the tide has utterly forsaken them. The soul is like those vanished waters, as to any manifestation that it continues to exist.

We miss the departed from his accustomed places; we expect to meet him at certain hours of the day; those hours return, and he

is not there; we start as we look upon his vacant place at the table, or around the evening lamp, or in the circle at prayers. No tongue can describe that blank, that chasm, which is made by death in the family circle, or the variations in the tones of sorrow and desire with which those words are secretly repeated, day after day, and night after night: "And where is he?"

Is there any assignable cause for the silence of the dead?

We cannot, with certainty, assign the reason for it, and we do not know why the dead are not suffered to reappear to us. We can, nevertheless, see great wisdom and use in this silence, and in our perfect ignorance respecting their state.

It is the arrangement of divine Providence that faith, and not sight, shall influence our characters and conduct.—It would be inconsistent with this great law if we should see or hear from the dead.

The object of God, in his dealings with us, is to exalt the Bible as our instructor. If men were left to visions and voices, in which there is so much room for mistake and delusion, the confusion of human affairs would be indescribably dreadful. Every man would have his vision, or his message, the proof, or the correctness, of which would necessarily be concealed from others, who might have contrary directions, or impressions; and human affairs would then be like a sea, in which many rivers ran across each other.

It would not be safe for departed spirits to be intrusted with the power of communicating with the living. Though they know far more than we, yet their information is limited; and, especially, if they should undertake to counsel us about the future, as they would do in their earnestness to help us, we can easily see that, being finite as they are, and unable to look into the future, they might involve us in serious mistakes, either by their ignorance, or by the contrariety of their information. Far better is

it for man to look only to God, who sees the end from the beginning, with whom is no variableness, and who is able, as our anxious friends would not be, to conceal from us the future, or any information respecting it, which it would be an injury for us to know. Should we be informed of certain things which will happen to us years hence, either the expectation of them would engross our attention, and hinder our usefulness, or the fear of them would paralyze effort, and destroy health, if not life. Borrowed trouble, even now, constitutes a large part of our unhappiness; but the certain knowledge of a sorrow approaching us with unrelenting steps, would spread a pall over every thing; while prosperity, far in the prospect, would tempt us to forget our dependence upon God, and would weaken the motives to patient continuance in well doing for its own sake.

Then, with regard to any assurance which the dead would give us about truth and duty, we need not their help. For the dead can tell

us substantially no more than we find recorded in the Bible. They would describe heaven to us, and speak of future punishment. But suppose that they did. What language would they use more graphic, or more intelligible to us, than the language of the Bible? Whatever they said, we should feel obliged to compare it with the Scriptures; if it should be according to them, we do not need it. Besides, the appearance to us of departed friends, would, in many cases, only operate on our fears. But the Bible pleads with us by many gentle motives, as well as by warnings and terrific descriptions, and sets before us numberless inducements to repent, which the whole world of the dead, uninspired, could not so well furnish. The appearance and words of a spirit would excite us, and make us afraid; we could not feel and act as well, under such influences, as we can under the calm, dispassionate, convincing, and persuasive influences of the Bible. One of the most intelligent and cultivated of women, the wife of a missionary in Turkey,

in her last sickness, having heard her husband read to her several times, from the Pilgrim's Progress, respecting the River of Death and the Celestial City, at last said to him, as he was opening the book, "Read to me out of the Bible; that soothes me; I can hear it for a long time; but even Bunyan agitates me."

As much as we suppose it would comfort us to have intercourse with the dead, it is easy to see that the great law of the divine government, by which faith, and not sight, is the appointed means of our spiritual good, would be violated, could the dead speak with us. We are to trust in the mercy and the justice of God. This we could not so well do, if we knew things about which, now, we are obliged to exercise faith. The inspired Word, the only and the all-sufficient rule of faith and duty, is a better guide than the voices of the dead.

An interesting illustration of this is given by one who witnessed the appearance of departed spirits on a certain most interesting occasion. Two illustrious men, of the Jewish line,

appeared and spake with Christ. The person of the Saviour experienced a remarkable transfiguration, assuring his human soul of the joy set before him; the presence of the celestial spirits, also, confirming his assurance respecting the separate existence of souls, and the whole transaction being designed to strengthen the faith of the disciples, and of the world, in the Saviour.

But what comparative value does one of the inspired witnesses of this scene give to this heavenly communication, these voices of the dead, and this visit from the heavenly world? Does he build his faith upon it, as upon a corner stone? No; but after telling us, in glowing language, respecting this most wonderful and impressive scene, he says, "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts." That sure word, — "more sure" than the testimony of departed spirits, or than voices from

the other world, — is the Bible; for he immediately adds, "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." The testimony of departed spirits, even of Moses and Elijah, might be, after all, only "the will of man;" but in the Bible men have spoken as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

As to its being a comfort, in any case, that departed friends should speak to us, it is doubtful whether it would prove to be so. Suppose them to utter words of endearment; this would open the fountains of grief in our souls afresh. Suppose them to tell us that they are safe and happy; it would be far better for us, in many cases, to hope respecting this, than to know it; the knowledge of it might make us careless and too confident about ourselves; we should be less inclined to shun the errors of these friends, to guard against their imperfections, and to fear lest a promise being left us of entering into that rest, any of us should

seem to come short of it. One of the most inconvenient and uneasy states of mind, is that of insatiable curiosity — longing to know that which is concealed, dispirited at the delay of information, refusing effort except under the spur of absolute assurance. Far better and more healthful is that state of mind which performs present duty, and leaves the rest to the unfolding hand of time; which disdains that prying, inquisitive disposition which is all eye and ear, which lives on excitement, which has no self-respect, nor regard for any thing but to know something yet unknown. If God suffered the dead to speak to us, we should always be on the watch for some sign; we should be unfitted for the common, practical duties of life; we should be superstitious, visionary, fanatical, timorous. As it is, how eager we are to pry into the future, or into things purposely hidden from us! If it were certainly known that one had communication with the dead, or if we had good reason to expect such communications, labor would be

neglected, faith, prayer, hope, confidence in God would decrease, the Bible would be undervalued through a superior regard to a different mode of revelation, and we should live, as it were, among the tombs. A morbid state of feeling would pervade our minds, and the world would be full of enchantments, necromancy, and cunning craftiness. Blessed be God for the silence of the dead! We are glad that our weak and foolish hearts, so prone to love the creature more than the Creator, are broken off, by the impenetrable veil of death, from all connection with the departed. The salutary influences of death on survivors would be greatly lessened, if our connection and communication with them were continued. God is our chief good, not our friends, nor our children; he shuts them up in silence from us, to see if we can say, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? And there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee." The painful effect upon our feelings, and upon our nervous system, of separations from departed friends, is involun-

tary and natural; but to cherish our griefs, to spend much time in melancholy moods, or in poring over the memorials of the departed, so as to excite and indulge morbid feelings, is not Christian nor wise.

While this is true, and there is much immoderate and irrational grief, the disposition, with many, is to forget the dead as soon as possible, and forever. Some need to think far more of the deceased. They should remember that the dead are alive; that no doubt they think of them; and that, instead of being separated farther and farther from the deceased, by the lapse of time, they are every day coming nearer and nearer to them, and they must meet again.

It is well for us frequently to remember that the silence of the dead is no true exponent of their real state. Incoherent and wild as the thoughts and feelings sometimes are, under the distracting influence of affliction and death, and all uncertain as we are about the departure of the soul, we are not left without

sure and most satisfying information respecting the separate state.

There is no annihilation. The life of the soul is not extinguished like the flame of a lamp. Existence is not that lingering, twinkling spark which it seems to be in the moments preceding death. To be absent from the body, for a Christian, is to be present with the Lord; to die is gain; to depart, and be with Christ, is far better. When the dust returns to the earth as it was, the spirit ascends to God, who gave it. The soul is more vigorous and active than when shut up in the body, because a higher form of life is required in being with God and angels. We are told that the pious dead are "the spirits of just men made perfect." All imperfection arising from bodily organization, as well as from our fallen state here, has ceased, and the soul has become a pure spirit, in a spiritual world, engaged in spiritual pursuits. Memory is awake; every perceptive faculty is in perfection; the soul that sees far distant places,

in a moment, in sleep, — that holds converse with other, but absent, minds, while the body is sealed in slumber, — not only does not need the present body to make it capable of perception, but when escaped from this material condition, and from dependence upon these bodily senses, which now are like colored glass to the eyes, it will be far more capable than before; though the spiritual body, at the last, will advance it to a still higher condition. Its judgment is sound, its sensibilities are quick, its thoughts are full of unmixed joy. But we probably could not understand the nature of its employments, nor its discoveries, nor its sensations, any further than we now do from the word of God. We have no record, nor tradition, of any disclosures made by Lazarus, or the widow of Nain's son, or the dead who came out of their graves at the crucifixion, and went into the Holy City, and appeared unto many. The only way to account for this seems to be, to suppose that they told nothing of what they had seen or heard. Had they

made any disclosures of the unseen world, those disclosures would never have been forgotten. They would have been preserved in the memories of men, to be handed down from age to age. Paul himself had no very distinct recollection of what he had heard and seen in Paradise; for he says that he could not tell whether he was in the body or out of the body. We think in words, which at the time are intelligible, but we often fail when we try to produce them; so that Paul's expression, very singular in each part of it, — "heard unspeakable words," — may refer to the impressions made on his own mind in his revelations, as not possible to be clothed in speech. It may have been with him, upon his return to the body, and with the risen dead, as it was with Nebuchadnezzar, who knew that he had dreamed, and the dream had made powerful impressions on his mind, but the dream itself had departed from him. Now, if the bodily senses, or the soul while in the body, cannot comprehend so as to express what has been seen in heaven, it is doubtful if

we could understand it if it should be revealed by a spirit from heaven. The Bible has probably given us as definite information about heaven as we could possibly understand — certainly as much as God judges best for our usefulness and happiness. But we must probably learn an unearthly language, and, in order to this, unearthly ideas, before we can understand the things which are within the veil. The modes of communication in heaven between people of strange languages, whether by a common speech, or by the power given to the disciples at the day of Pentecost, or by intuition, are not made known to us; but this wonderful faculty of language, holding an intermediate place between spirit and matter, has, of course, a corresponding faculty in the world of spirits. It is, no doubt, an inconceivably pleasurable source of enjoyment. This increases the sublimity which there is in the silence of the dead, and its impressiveness. For what fancy can conceive of the communications, from heart to heart, in that multitude where

every new acquaintance is the occasion of some new joy, or wakes some thrilling recollection, or leads to some interesting discovery, and gives some fresh objects of love and praise! The land of silence surely extends no farther than to the gates of that heavenly city. All is life and activity within; but from that world, so populous with thoughts, and words, and songs, no revelation penetrates through the dark, silent land which lies between us and them. Our friends are there. Stars, so distant from us that their light, which began its travel ages since, has not reached us, are none the less worlds, performing their revolutions, and occupied by their busy population of intelligent spirits, whose history is full of wonders. Yet the first ray denoting the existence of those worlds, has never met the eye of the astronomer in his incessant vigils.

The silence of the departed will, for each of us, soon, very soon, be interrupted. Entering, among breaking shadows and softly unfolding light, the border land, we shall gradually

awake to the opening vision of things unseen and eternal, all so kindly revealing themselves to our unaccustomed senses as to make us say, "How beautiful!" and instead of exciting fear, leading us almost to hasten the hand which is removing the veil. Some well-known voice, so long silent, may be the first to utter our name; we are recognized, we are safe. A face, a dear, dear face, breaks forth amidst the crayoned lines of the dissolving night; a form — an embrace — assures us that faith has not deceived us, but has delivered us up to the objects hoped for, the things not seen. O beatific moment! awaiting every follower of them who, by faith and patience, inherit the promises — dwellers there "whither the Forerunner is for us entered."

As we are soon to be utterly silent towards surviving friends, and the world in which we now live, we should use our speech as we shall wish we had done when we are silent in death. Any counsels, instructions, records,

explanations, communications of any kind, which we would make, we should be diligent to perform. All the loving words, and tokens of affection, which we may suppose we shall hereafter desire to communicate, we shall do well habitually to bear in mind, and let them influence our feelings and conduct, day by day. In times of sickness, of separation, of absence, at happy returns, our feelings towards familiar friends and members of the family are such as might well be the standard, and pattern, of our general intercourse, especially when we think that the days will come when we shall highly prize and long for that intercourse, which now we have such opportunity to enrich with sweet and fragrant recollections, occasioning no pang of regret, nor sting. It is well to remember that, one day, we must part, and to let that anticipation intensify our love, and add charms to this daily companionship, which may soon appear to be a privilege which we did not sufficiently prize.

The time will come, when, to many a beloved

survivor, a word or sign, breaking the silence of the departed spirit, and giving some assurance that it is happy, would, perhaps, be the means of dispelling a life-long sorrow — would lift a crushing burden from the heart. The time to prepare that assurance, so that it shall come with most effectual power, is now, in days of health, when the evidences of our piety shall not be attainted by a suspicion of constraint and insincerity, arising from late repentance and an apparently forced submission to God. Our recollections of a departed Christian friend, of whose salvation his pious life makes us perfectly assured, come over us like the soft pulsations of a west wind in summer, laden with the sweets of a new-mown field; or like the clear, streaming moonlight in the brief interval between the broken clouds; or like remembered music, which some accidental word of a song has startled from its place and diffused through the soul. Thus departed Christian friends are the means of unspeakable

happiness to survivors; thus "their works do follow them;" and we should make large account of this when we are weighing the question whether we will now, or in the closing hours of life, so fearfully uncertain, begin to love and serve God.

The question which earth asks respecting one and another, "Where is he?" is no doubt repeated in heaven: Have you met him in any of these streets? Did you see him on yonder hills? Angels, returned from other happy worlds, have you heard of him? Where is he? He is conscious, intelligent, receiving sensations from objects around him as vividly as ever. But, Where is he?

Of others, the question could be answered by ten thousand happy voices, "All is well." With regard to many, the silence of the dead, forbidding our inquiries, is the only thing which, in any measure, composes the grief of friends. But as to our Christian friends, we have no more reason to inquire with solicitude respect-

ing them, than concerning the Saviour himself. "I go to prepare a place for you,"—"that where I am, there ye may be also." The dying Christian may truly say to his friends, as the Saviour did to his: "WHITHER I GO YE KNOW, AND THE WAY YE KNOW."

V.

THE REDEMPTION OF THE BODY.

What though my body run to dust?
Faith cleaves unto it, counting every grain
With an exact and most particular trust,
Reserving all for flesh again.

GEORGE HERBERT.

IT is good to think of Michael, the archangel, disputing with the devil about the body of Moses. The dispute was over a grave. The Most High had himself performed the funeral rites of his servant; for, we read, "The Lord buried him." We naturally think of the archangel as placed in charge of the precious dust.

Some great commission, connected with the resurrection of the dead, appears to be held by the chief spirit of the angelic world. "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God." The burial of each

and every body which is destined to the resurrection of the just, is, therefore, not improbably an object of interest with him who, under the God-man, will have the supervision of the last day. With a view to that harvest of the earth, he will now see the furrows made, the seed planted, the hill prepared. He will have a care that every thing lies down, whether by seeming accident, or by violence, or by design, in just the place from which the arranging mind of Him who is Lord both of the dead and of the living, has appointed it to come forth. Every circumstance attending that event, the great object of hope in heaven and on earth, — our resurrection, — is of sufficient importance to be the subject of thought and preparation on the part of Christ, himself the first fruits of them that slept.

The care of the patriarchs concerning their burial places is like one of those premonitions in an antecedent stratum of geology, or species of animals, of a coming manifestation; — a prophesying germ, a yearning, created by Him

who, with all-seeing wisdom, establishes anticipations in the moral, as well as in the natural, world, concerning things with regard to which a thousand years are with him as one day.

Not on earth alone, as it seems, is an interest felt in the death and burial of the righteous.

For when the leader of Israel in the wilderness went up to the hill top to die, the two great angels, of heaven and hell, met and contended over his grave.

Denied the privilege of burial in the promised land, Moses may have appeared to Satan so evidently under the frown of God, as to encourage his meddlesome efforts to inflict some injury upon him, through dishonor done to his remains. Perhaps he would convey them back to Egypt, a gift to the brooding vengeance of the Pharaohs, who would gratify their anger by preserving that body in the house of their gods; — thus showing their spiteful satisfaction at the disappointment of the prophet whom Jehovah would not permit to enter that prom-

ised land, in hope of which the great spoiler had led away the bondmen of Egypt.

Perhaps the devil would gratify the desire of some idolatrous nation, craving new objects of worship, by leading them to canonize this Hebrew chief; and thus make of the lawgiver and prophet of Israel a false god.

Perhaps he could even prevail on some of the Israelites themselves, if not the whole of them, to worship this revered form; or might he but have the designation and the custody of his grave, he would, perhaps, fix it where it would be most convenient for the nation to assemble, at stated times, for some idolatrous rites.

But the great vicegerent of the resurrection was there. To him the body of a saint is suggestive of the last day; it is a special assignment by Christ, an official trust, to the archangel. Bodies of saints are, therefore, most precious to him. Particles of the precious metal are not more precious to the miner, pearls to the diver, ivory to the Coast-merchant, and the shell-fish to the maker of Tyrian

purple. The body of each saint is an unfinished history of redemption; a destiny of indescribable interest and importance belongs to it. Any subaltern angel may have charge of winds and seas, of day and night, of summer and winter; but only the archangel is counted meet to have charge, and to keep watch and ward, over the bodies of saints as they sleep in Jesus.

"He disputed about the body of Moses." It was a dispute characterized on the part of the archangel more by act than word. Words are hushed in great encounters. Debate with a pirate, a body-snatcher, would be folly; no arguments, therefore, were wasted, on the top of Nebo, by Michael, over the grave of Moses. "The Lord rebuke thee," was his retort; his heavenly form stopping the way, his baffling right arm hindering the accursed design, were the invincible logic of that dispute.

O prince of angels, watchman, herald, master of the guard, at the resurrection of the just,— comptroller, now, of that treasury which re-

ceives and keeps their precious forms, — from whose lips that signal is to come which millions on millions are to hear, and live, — what images of glory and terror fill thy mind in the anticipation of that moment when thy dread commission is to be fulfilled! Is not that "trumpet" sometimes taken into thy hand? Dost thou not place it to thy lips, but quickly lay it aside, and patiently and joyfully watch the swelling number of the graves of saints? Funerals of those who fall asleep in Jesus, to thee are pleasant scenes; they are spring-work, planting times, for thy harvest, O chief reaper! While, with bursting hearts, we turn from the new-made mound, one more glorified body, in anticipation, is added to thy charge.

Smiling at our sorrow, in joyful thought of the change to be witnessed in and around that sepulchre when the family circle shall there put on incorruption, thou canst not pity us except as we pity the brief sorrows of children. If the devil should approach that spot, to work some unknown, and, to us, incon-

ceivable, harm to that body, — be it the body of the humblest saint, one of those little ones who believe in Jesus, or of those infants whose angels do always behold the face of God, — thou, mighty cherub, wouldst be there, and, if need be, with a band of angels, "every one with his sword upon his thigh, because of fear in the night;" and Nebo and its "dispute" would reappear. Poor, dying, mouldering body! hast thou the archangel himself for thy keeper? Not only so:

> "God, my Redeemer, lives,
> And often from the skies
> Looks down and watches all my dust,
> Till he shall bid it rise."

Nor is it strange, since we read, "The body is for the Lord, and the Lord for the body." "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you?"

To rise from the dead seems to have been something more to Paul than going to heaven, or than being in heaven. He knew that he was to spend the interval between death and

the resurrection in heaven; but beyond even this, he had a joy which he felt was essential to the completeness of the heavenly state.

See the proof of this in the following words: "If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead."

Since he was destined, like all of Adam's race, to come forth from his grave, he needed to make no effort whatever merely to rise from the dead; that was inevitable, and irrespective of character. Besides, he represents this object for which he strove as something which required effort, which cannot be said of merely rising from the grave.

Paul had been permitted to know, by personal observation, what the rising from the dead implies. Caught up into Paradise, we may suppose that he had seen the patriarch Enoch, and the prophet Elijah, with their glorified bodies; the presence of which in heaven, we may imagine, has ever served to enhance the happiness of that world, by holding forth, before the eyes of the redeemed, the sign and

pledge of their future experience when they shall receive their bodies. For it is not presumptuous to suppose that the sight of Enoch and Elijah has been, and will be, till the last trumpet sounds, a source of joyful expectation to the inhabitants of heaven, leading them to anticipate the final day with intense interest, as the time when they will be invested, like those honored saints, with all the capacities of their completed nature, which nature, while the body lies buried, is in a dissevered state. If Paul, when in heaven, saw and felt the power of this expectation in the minds of glorified saints, no wonder that the resurrection of the body seemed to him, ever after, to be the crown of Christian expectation and hope.

More than all, he had seen the man Christ Jesus, in his glorified body; who on earth had said, "I am the resurrection and the life" — himself an illustration of it, whom alone the grave has yielded up to die no more. He is, therefore, to saints in heaven, a far more inter-

esting object than Enoch and Elijah, who never died. "For now is Christ risen from the dead, and is become the first fruits of them that slept." This sight, of Christ in heaven, must have had unutterable interest for Paul, from the assurance that Christ will "change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body;" for "we know that when he shall appear," Paul himself tells us, "we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." This knowledge, obtained in the heavenly world, may have led the apostle to think of the resurrection as the crown of all his expectations and hopes.

It is noticeable that the writers of the New Testament, and Jesus himself, refer chiefly to the resurrection and the last day as sources of comfort, and also of warning. Now this is made a principal ground of belief, with many, that there is either no consciousness between death and the resurrection; or, that none have gone to heaven, nor to hell, but to intermediate places, seeing that final rewards and punish-

ments are, in so many instances, wholly predicated of the last day.

But those who believe that the souls of the righteous are, at their death, made perfect in holiness, and do immediately pass into glory, see proof, in all this prominence which is given to the last day, and to the resurrection, that the sacred writers regarded the resurrection and final judgment as the great consummation, towards which souls, in heaven and in hell, would be looking forward with intense expectation and interest; that neither will the joys of heaven nor the pains of hell be complete, till the account of our whole influence upon the world, extending to the end of time, is made up, and the body is added to the soul. When Paul comforts the mourners of Thessalonica, he bids them to "sorrow not as they that have no hope; for," (and now he does not speak of heaven, and of souls being already there, as the source of consolation, but) "if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them, also, that sleep in Jesus will God bring

with him;" and he proceeds to speak of the resurrection, — not of the speedy reunion of friends after death, but of the departed as coming with Christ at the last day. This, instead of being an argument against the immediate departure of souls to heaven, arises from the desire to employ the strongest possible proof that the pious dead are not only safe, but are greatly honored! "Resurrection" was an abounding subject of thought, argument, and illustration in those days; the state of the dead between death and the last day, is comparatively disregarded by the apostles, while their minds were full of the great question of the age — the Resurrection. This fulness of thought and constant occupation of mind about the resurrection, as the cardinal doctrine of Christian hope, explains the apparent belief of the apostles, in some passages, that the final day was near. This the apostle Paul expressly denies, in the second chapter of the Second Epistle to the Thessalonians. But a greater event, looked at in the same line of vision with

an intermediate and smaller object, will, of course, have the prominent place in our thoughts. The less will be held subordinate to the greater; perhaps we shall seem to underrate the less, in our exalted conceptions of that which rises beyond and above. We shall see, as we proceed, why the expectation of the last day seemed to occupy the thoughts of apostles as the paramount object of expectation.

It is perfectly obvious that, at the resurrection, the bodies of the just will be endued with wonderful susceptibilities and powers. This is rendered certain by the great mystery of godliness, — God manifest in the flesh. The greatest honor which could be conferred upon our nature, and the greatest testimony to its intrinsic dignity, and to its being, in its unfallen state, in the image of God, is bestowed upon it by the incarnation of the Word. True, there was a necessity that the Redeemer should be made like unto us, however inferior human nature might be in the scale of creation; still, unless there had been such intrinsic dignity and

excellence in our sinless nature, as to make it compatible for the second Person in the Godhead to be united with it, we cannot suppose that this union would have been permanent; it would have fulfilled a temporary purpose, and then have ceased.

Perhaps we slightly err if we think of Christ's assumption of human nature as, in any respect, an incongruous act of humiliation. For man was made in the image of God; so that when Christ was made flesh, without sin, he took upon himself that which, in some sense, was congruous with his divine nature. His humiliation consisted, in part, in his doing this; but more especially in his doing this for such a purpose — for sinners; "in his being born, and that in a low condition, made under the law, undergoing the miseries of this life, the wrath of God, and the cursed death of the cross, in being buried and continuing under the power of death for a time." Had there been no inherent congruity between our nature and the divine, the human nature of

Christ, having accomplished its purpose of suffering and death, would have been left in the grave. "But now is Christ risen from the dead;" the body and the human soul, which were disunited when he hung upon the cross, now constitute the same man, Christ Jesus. "The only Redeemer of God's elect is the Lord Jesus Christ, who, being the eternal Son of God, became man, and so was, and continues to be, God and man, in two distinct natures and one person, forever." The latter part of this answer of the Assembly's Shorter Catechism is thus substantiated by the New Testament: "When he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." In other words, he will be, when he appears, that which he now is — will remain the same until his second coming. After that, he will remain as he was before: "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and forever." He is represented as holding an eternal relation to the redeemed in his glorified nature: "The Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall

feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters." We might, indeed, suppose that the man Christ Jesus would have an eternal recompense for his sufferings and death in an everlasting union with the Godhead; nor can any one think, with satisfaction, of a severance between his two natures, and of a consequent humiliation, or deposition, of that human nature, which, at the great day, will, for so long a time, have sustained such a connection with the divine nature. For our present purpose, however, which is to show the intrinsic dignity of the human nature, it would be enough that it has been in such connection with the Godhead, and has passed through such scenes, and sustained such vast responsibilities. This is sufficient to prove that human nature is intrinsically capable and great; and, indeed, it reveals to us as nothing else does, the real dignity of our nature. Some, who have rejected the doctrine of Christ's two natures, have written much and eloquently with regard to man's greatness in creation. They, however, missed

the very thing which chiefly proves it; for all who believe in the Deity of Christ have a proof and illustration of this great theme which transcend all others.

This idea, of future capability and exaltation for human nature, as proved by the Saviour's incarnation, is brought to view in the second chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews. The second Psalm is there quoted as speaking of man: "Thou hast put all things under his feet." "But now," the apostle says, "we see not yet all things put under him;" man, as a race, has not reached his full destiny of glory and honor; but, in the person of Christ, human nature has taken possession of its future inheritance. We see not yet all things put under man, as a race; but "we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor;" — a sign and pledge of our destiny.

To the mind of Paul, the sight, in heaven, of what he was to become, set forth by the glorified person of the Son of God, his Saviour and

infinite Friend, no doubt made the resumption of the body, at the last day, the most desirable experience of which it was possible for him to conceive. Paradise, with all its social pleasures, gates of pearl, streets of gold, every thing, in short, external to him, must have seemed, to the apostle, not worthy to be compared with the glory which was to be revealed in him. An intelligent man is far more interested in his own personal endowments, than in the accidental circumstances of his situation. Every one, who is not degraded in his feelings, would prefer to be enriched with natural, moral, and intellectual powers, rather than be the richest of men, or an hereditary monarch, with inferior talents and worth. To such a man as Paul, the possession of his complete, glorified nature, at the resurrection, must, for this reason, have seemed far better than all the pleasures or honors of the heavenly world. That completed nature would constitute him a being wholly perfected, invest him with a likeness to the Son of God, bring him into still nearer

union with that adorable Redeemer, who, Paul says, loved him and gave himself for him, and for whom, he says, he had suffered the loss of all things. The sight of the man Christ Jesus wearing Paul's nature in a glorified state, no doubt lived and glowed in his memory after his return to earth, and made him think of the resurrection as the event, in his personal history, to which every thing else was subordinate. He shows the interest which he felt in this event, when, writing to the Romans, he says, "And not only they," — that is, "the creatures," or creation, — "but ourselves, also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption, of our body." In his address, at Jerusalem, before his accusers and the people, he cried out, "Of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question." It was uniformly a prominent topic of his thoughts.

It is by no means impossible, nor improbable, judging from analogy, that there may be,

in the human soul, faculties which are slumbering, until a glorified body assists in their development. Persons born blind have the dormant faculty of seeing; the gift of the eye would bring it into exercise. So of the other senses, and their related mental faculties. With a glorified body, then, truly it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but the thought itself is rapture, that our souls at present may be as disproportioned to their future expansion, as the acorn is to the oak of a century's growth, which is infolded now, and dormant, in the seed.

The addition of a body to the glorified spirit will, therefore, be a help, and not an encumbrance. For we are not to suppose that the soul, after having been for centuries in a state superior to its present condition, would retrograde, in returning to the body. A common idea respecting a body is, that it is necessarily a clog. True, by reason of sin and its effects, it is now a "vile body;" and Paul speaks of it as "the body of this death." But, even

while we are in this world, a body is an indispensable help to the soul. The disembodied spirit, probably, is not capable of sustaining a full, active relation to a world of matter; a material form is necessary to make its powers serviceable here. This being so, there is certainly reason, from analogy, to suppose that the addition of a spiritual body to the glorified soul will not necessarily work any deterioration to the spirit. At all events, we cannot suppose that the bliss of heaven will be suffered to diminish, by remanding the emancipated spirit into connection with any thing which will subtract from the state to which it will have arrived. There is a law of progress in the divine government, by which the intelligent universe will be forever advancing. We are to be changed "from glory to glory;" not from a greater glory to a less, but into the same image with Christ.

It is the opinion of some that every created being has a corporeal part, and that God alone is perfectly a spirit. However this may be, it

is evident that the souls of believers after death, though advanced far beyond their present earthly condition, and though they are "with Christ," and though to die is gain, and though they are in the heaven of heavens with Christ, (which is where the penitent thief went, and where Paul had his revelation, and where Christ went when he died; — for Paul uses the words "third heavens," and "Paradise," interchangeably,) are, nevertheless, incomplete as to their natures, "waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." Where in the Bible are we led to suppose that they are detained in an inferior region, or that there are, at most, only two redeemed human beings now in "heaven," viz., Enoch and Elijah, or probably not even they? But a corporeal part, we may suppose, is necessary to the fullest participation in the employments and enjoyments of the spiritual world. Light requires atmosphere to modify it for the human eye, which otherwise could not endure its brightness. So it may be that a corporeal part is necessary to modify

many of the things which are unseen and eternal, that they may be apprehended by the soul. Let no one say that matter must obstruct or dim the senses of the soul; that a body must act as a veil to the spirit, and shut out much knowledge. It is not so here. Matter helps us in the acquisition of knowledge, as, for example, glass in optical instruments. The telescope, with its lenses, gives the eye vast compass; the microscope gives it a power, equally wonderful, of minute vision. True, in these cases it is matter helping matter — glass assisting the eye; the analogy is not perfect between this and the aid which the spiritual body may afford the soul. But, if we remember that there is to be progression in the powers and faculties of our nature, and that if a body is added to the glorified spirit, it must be to assist it, to put it forward in its acquisitions and enjoyments, we cannot resist the belief that the addition of the new body to the soul will be a vast accession of power and capability. If the eye and the mind can receive

such aid from the telescope here, who knows that the eye of the glorified body may not be itself a telescope, increasing in its capability with the progress of its being.

We may have some view of what the glorified body must necessarily be, in thinking of it as a fit companion to the glorified spirit. The soul having been in heaven for ages, and having grown in all spiritual excellence, the body, to be a help to such a spirit, to be an occasion of joy, and not of regret, must, of course, be in advance of our present corporeal nature. What must the body of Isaiah, and of David, be, at the resurrection, to correspond with the vast powers and attainments of those glorified spirits? We could not believe, certainly we could not see, how these bodies of ours could be made capable of such union, were it not that, in the man Christ Jesus, we see our corporeal nature capable of such transformation as to make it compatible for his human mind, and indwelling Deity, to receive it into their ineffable union.

All this being so, we may, in some measure, conceive of the feelings with which the souls in heaven anticipate the resurrection; and we cease to wonder why Paul speaks of his resurrection as the great object of his desire — not merely to be in heaven, but, being in heaven, with Christ, to be in possession of a completed nature, like Christ's.

From the grave where it was sown in corruption, it will come forth in incorruption; sown in dishonor, it will be raised in glory; sown in weakness, it will be raised in power; sown a natural body, it will be raised a spiritual body. It was "bare grain" when it fell into the earth; but the corn, with its stalk, and leaves, and the curious ear, with its silk, and its wrappings, the multiplication of the "bare grain" into such a product, are an illustration of the apostle's words, — "Thou sowest not that body that shall be;" hence, he argues, say not, incredulously, "How are the dead raised, and with what body do they come?" God giveth the grain a body as it hath pleased him; he

can do the same with regard to that part of man's nature which is committed for a while to the earth. Let not the natural difficulties connected with this subject make us sceptical. There are no more difficulties connected with a grave than with a grape vine. Those distant twigs, on that dry vine, begin to bud and blossom; grapes form upon them; it is filled with clusters. Is there any thing in the resurrection more strange than this? Twice, inspiration says to a man, "Thou fool!" — once, to a godless, rich man, and, once, to him who is sceptical about the resurrection of the body.

When the glorified spirit and the glorified body meet, the moment when the investiture of the soul with its spiritual form takes place, and the forcible divorce of the soul and body is terminated by new, strange nuptials, there must be an experience which now defies all power of imagination. We may have known, in this world, all the thrilling experiences of which our natures here are capable; we shall also have seen and felt what it is to awake in

heaven, satisfied with Christ's likeness; and all the new-born joys of heavenly sensations will have seemed to leave us nothing to be experienced which can bring a new rapture to the heart; yet when the body is raised, and the triumphant spirit comes to put it on afresh, it will be an addition to all the past joys of the heavenly state. As we look on one another, and see, in each other's beauty and glory, an image of our own; as we remember how we visited the graves of loved ones, and what thoughts and feelings we had there, and then see those graves yielding forms like Christ's; as we see the Saviour's person mirrored in ours on every side, and behold the living changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, there will be an exceeding great joy, such, perhaps, as the universe had never before known. But to each of us the most perfect joy will be his own consciousness, existence being then a rapture such as we never experienced. Then the bird is winged, the jewel is set in gold, the flower blooms, the harp receives all her strings,

the heir is crowned. No wonder that Paul said, looking through and beyond heaven, "If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead."

Perhaps we now think of the last day with dread, as a day of consternation. It is not always that we can think of the heavens on fire, the earth dissolved, the dead arising, and the judgment proceeding, without some feeling of dismay. But in heaven, we shall long have anticipated that day as the day of our complete triumph. The grave will, till that time, have imprisoned one part of our nature. The curse of the law will not have passed away entirely, and in every respect, till all which belongs to us is redeemed from every natural, as well as moral, consequence of sin. It will be an expectation of unmingled joy to see this accomplished. The approach of the day will fill us with more pleasure than the arrival of any other wished-for moment. We shall come with Christ to judgment. "Them that sleep in Jesus will God bring with him." We shall

have a part in the glory of Christ, and be associated with him; for, "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?" "Know ye not that we shall judge angels?" What curious interest there will be to receive back from the dust of the earth the dishonored, corrupted, mouldered, wasted, perished body. In the Saviour, even, we shall not have seen all the wonders of the resurrection from the dead; for, "He whom God raised saw no corruption;" but we shall be raised from corruption. To be clothed upon with that house which is from heaven, to be a completed, perfected human being, will be, up to that time, the greatest possible manifestation to us of divine wisdom and power.

The new body will bring with it sources of enjoyment which will be a vast addition to the previous happiness of heaven. There will be perfect satisfaction in every one with his own body—no consciousness of defects, of deformity, of weakness. Comparisons of ourselves with others will not excite dissatisfaction and envy; every one will be perfect of his kind,

and will differ in some things from every other, and will be an object of love and admiration with all. We are astonished here with the intellectual, oratorical, vocal powers of others, with their knowledge, their talent, their skill; but there we shall no doubt be filled also with astonishment at our own powers and acquisitions, and thus we shall be more capable of appreciating and enjoying the endowments of others. God is pleased to raise up one and another, from time to time, with great powers to charm their fellow-creatures; and thus he would lure us on to heaven, teaching us how much we can enjoy, and how much we shall lose if we are not saved. Those who are deprived of very many intellectual and social pleasures here, which they could appreciate as well as their more favored friends, will soon have it made up to them. By the likeness of their glorified nature to the human nature of Christ, they are to be intimately associated with him forever. This, of itself, is an assurance and pledge, that their heavenly happiness

will not be measured by their relative inferiority to their brethren in this world. To a benevolent mind it is a great joy to think of good people, who are deprived, in this world, of education and culture, entering upon a career of boundless knowledge, rising to the highest pitch of mental development, and enjoying it all the more for their former disadvantages in their probationary state. "And, behold, there are last which shall be first." Distinctions made here by knowledge will be transient, like gifts of prophecy, and tongues; for it is in this sense that it is said, "whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away." And when we look upon those dear children of God who have long suffered under bodily deformity, and "have borne, and have had patience, and have not fainted," we love to think of their glorified bodies, and of that rich zest in the possession of them which will be both the natural consequence, and the gracious reward, of their patience; nay, we love to think that some special, personal beauty, some peculiar

grace and glory, may be given them by Him who so delights in compensatory acts in nature, in providence, and in grace.

Was it not the object of the transfiguration, in part, to give the human soul of Christ such an idea of his future glory in heaven, as to strengthen him for his agony and death? Yes; for the heavenly visitants "spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem." That anticipation of his glorified nature was a part of "the joy set before him." Let Christ on Tabor, and faith, do for us, with regard to present bodily sorrows and sufferings, that which the transfiguration did for Jesus in the days of his humiliation. "Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself."

Through the long interval of death and the separate state, the anticipation of the last day and of the resurrection will, no doubt, be to the wicked a predominant source of terror.

While the joyful anticipations of it, in heaven, will be like the advancing steps of morning, when there begin to be signs, in the tabernacle for the sun, of that bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and of that strong man rejoicing to run a race, and every thing will be astir with the notes of preparation for that day, for which all other days were made, the approach of it will be, to the lost, a deepening gloom, its arrival the settling down of interminable night. Instead of entering into their bodies with transport, as the righteous do, they will each be like a prisoner removed from one jail to another with new bars and bolts. If it be not unreasonable to suppose that the appearance of the body will conform to the character, and if the bodies of Isaiah, and Paul, and John must be seraphic, to correspond with their experience and attainments, what must the bodies of the wicked be! They will have spent centuries in sinning, and suffering, debased in every part, the image of God supplanted by the image of him whose service they preferred

to that of a holy God and Saviour. What a moment will that be, when the sinner's grave is opened by the last trumpet, and a hideous form rises to receive a frantic spirit! "The harvest is the end of the world, and the reapers are the angels." "As, therefore, the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so shall it be in the end of this world. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth." "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." There will be separations at the graves of those who lay side by side in death; many a tomb will yield up subjects both for heaven and for hell; the differences in character, between the regenerate and unregenerate, will there be made conspicuous in the correspondence of the risen body to the soul, according as

the soul shall have arrived at the grave from a state of joy or of woe. Arrests will be made, there will be forcible detentions, overpowering strength, disregard of entreaties, remorseless rendings asunder of families, unclasping of embraces, and an indiscriminate mixture of all classes among the wicked, indicated by the command, "Bind ye the tares together, in bundles, to be burned." Nor will this be worse for holy angels to witness, than it was to see those sinners turn their backs on the Lord's supper, year after year. They could treat their Saviour's dying agonies, and his blood, with perfect neglect and contempt, through their love of the world and sin; now they eat the fruit of their own way, and are filled with their own devices. Our treatment of the Saviour will return upon our own heads. What a change will be made in the ideas which many sentimentalists had of holy angels, when they see them executing the terrible orders of their King! and what an illustration it will give of the severity of justice, — the rigors

of its execution being compatible with the pure benevolence of holy angels, because of God. We are constantly admonished that the punishment of the wicked will be a great part of the proceedings on that day. It is called "the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men." "Behold, the Lord cometh, with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment."

All this serves to invest the death of a dear Christian friend, in our thoughts, with inexpressible peace and comfort. He, with his Redeemer, can say, "My flesh, also, shall rest in hope." If we are confident that a friend is gone to be with Christ, death is, even now, swallowed up of life; and now the thought of what the soul is to inherit, both before and after the resurrection, and its contrast with the experience of the lost, should make us joyful in tribulation. True, we cannot, by any artifice or illusion, make death itself cease to be a curse. Full of beauty and consolation as it may be, — nay, we will call it triumphant, — yet

nothing saddens the mind, for the time, more than the sight of true beauty. In heaven things beautiful will not make us sad; nor will the remembrance of a past joy, which so inevitably has that effect upon us here. We are beholding a sunset. Day is flinging up all its treasures, as though it were breaking to pieces its pavilion forever and scattering the fragments; and now, when all seemed past, one more flood of glory streams over the scene, but only for a moment; then comes a last touch of pathos, here and there, like a more distant farewell, a whispered good night. Have tears never come unbidden, do we never feel sad, at such a time? Is not the whole of life, past, present, and to come, then tinged with sombre hues? and all because the dying day expires with such beauty and peace. Not so when a storm suddenly brings in night upon us. Then we are nerved and braced; we hear no minor key in the voice of the departing day. It is perfectly natural, therefore, to weep over our dead, even when every thing in their

departure is consolatory and beautiful. It is interesting to observe that it was even when he was on his way to raise the dead body of his friend, and thus to comfort the weeping sisters, that "Jesus wept."

Let us more and more love the Christian's grave. Angels love it. Two of them sat in the tomb where the body of Jesus had lain — they loosed the napkin that was about his head, and "wrapped" it "together in a place by itself;" and when Jesus had left the place, instead of following him, they lingered, to comfort the weeping friends on their arrival at the sepulchre. Can it be Michael, guardian of the dead Moses and his grave, on "the great stone" which has been rolled "from the door of the sepulchre"? Is he thinking how he will one day hear the command, "Take ye away the stone" which covers all who sleep in Jesus? As the cross is hallowed by the death of the Son of God upon it, the grave is hallowed for the believer through the Saviour's burial. There are three places which must

possess intense interest for a glorified friend. One is his home; another is his seat in the house of God; and another is his grave. Let us cherish it. We do well to visit such a spot. Sometimes approaching it with sadness and fear, we go away with surprising peace; looking back for a last view of the stone, and feeling towards the spot as we do when we are leaving little children in the dark for the night, unutterable love, we find, has cast out fear. Those graves are treasures which heaven has made sure, "sealing the stone, and setting a watch." Of those who still live, we are not certain that, in the providence of God, they will henceforth be an unmingled source of comfort; but they who are in those graves are garnered fruits, are finished works, are each like the rod of Aaron laid up in the ark, which "bloomed blossoms and yielded almonds." All else which is dear to us on earth may seem changeful, or changed; the property may have disappeared, the home may have been broken up, the plighted faith and love may have been recalled; the whole

condition of life may have been altered: but we visit that burial spot, and there is permanence; that fast-anchored isle has defied the surges and roaring currents; the grave seems beautifully constant; it has not betrayed our confidence; it is not weary of its precious charge; it has kindly staid behind to permit and encourage our griefs when all else may have fled. The winter's snows have fallen, the tempests have beaten, there; and now, this April or May morning, it is as steadfast and quiet as when the slumber there began.

Great honor is paid to the dead in giving them precedence to the living at the last day. "The dead in Christ shall rise first," that is, before the living are changed; — they shall rise, and after that, in a moment, in a twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet, the living will be transformed; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. This is said in order to comfort those who mourn the death of Christian friends, — intimating such care on the part

of their Redeemer, that the apostle is directed to tell us "by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive, and remain to the coming of the Lord, shall not" have precedence of "them that are asleep." It is declared that the change of the living will be effected "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye." This must be a matter of pure revelation; for it could not have been foretold, from any apparent probabilities, whether it would happen instantaneously or by degrees. It is suited to impress the mind with the power and majesty of Christ, inasmuch as this is to be one of the great acts connected with his second coming, and as really an exercise of his omnipotence as the raising of the dead. For he is "Lord both of the dead and of the living."

"And the sea shall give up the dead that are in it." Many a form of a believer is waiting there for the redemption of the body. Nor has it escaped the eye of the great archangel. Wrapped in its rude shroud, or decomposed and scattered, or in whatever way seemingly

annihilated, personal identity still attaches to it, and the all-seeing eye watches every thing which is essential to that identity, as easily as though the body were in the grave with kindred dust. That the power of God in the resurrection may be fully illustrated, and that some may be preëminent witnesses in their own persons of that mighty power, perhaps it will appear that they were permitted, for that purpose, to be devoured, or to dissolve and to waste away in the sea. If they who came out of great tribulation are arrayed in white robes among the righteous, we may look for some special sign of glory and joy in those who receive their bodies, not from the sheltering grave, but from the sea, and from the very frame of nature, into which their bodily organization will, in one way and another, have been incorporated. O the unspeakable wonders and raptures connected with the resurrection, both as it relates to our own experience, and to the illustrations which the resurrection will afford, of the divine wisdom and power. No wonder,

we say, that Paul esteemed it the height of Christian privilege, that he, as a redeemed human being, "might attain unto the resurrection of the dead."

It is an innocent fancy, if it be not worthy of a better name, that the great attention which has been given of late years to new cemeteries, now in such contrast to the old graveyards, whose reckless disorder so perfectly expressed abandonment to sorrow and unresisting surrender to the last enemy, is a symptomatic token of growing faith in the great, general heart of the Christianized part of the race, with regard to that consummation of all things, the resurrection of the dead.

As at sea there is, within certain degrees of latitude and longitude, an uphill and a downhill, made by the convexity of the globe, we, perhaps, may have reached the meridian of the great voyage, and may have begun to feel the inclination which will set us forward more swiftly to the end. The power of the great consummation will be waxing stronger and

stronger. Men are looking to the cemeteries as places where great treasures went down, or were abandoned, and they begin to think that some great restoration awaits them. These costly and beautiful cemeteries, which men are preparing, are like Hiram's contributions to the building of the temple; they foretell some great thing; they have a look not only of expectation, but of design, not merely of faith, but of hope. With a truly liberal regard to the decoration of those burial places with costly works of general interest, in the department of art, we shall do well to make provision, by statute, for the perpetual repair and preservation of every enclosure, and every grave, the whole body corporate thus pledging itself, as far as possible, to each incumbent, that his last resting place shall be the care of the perpetuated fraternity to the end of time.

And when the prophecies are accomplished, and the stone cut out of the mountain without hands has filled the earth, and the apostasy which is to follow the general prevalence of

religion, has deluged the world with blood, and Satan, loosed a little season, is triumphing in his maddened career, and the graves are full, and the souls under the altar, with their importunate cry, can no longer wait for the avenging arm,—then shall be seen the sign of the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory.

As we commit a Christian friend to the earth, and as we visit his resting place, let us think that now, the anticipation of the rising from the dead is, to him, the great object of personal expectation and hope. The time is not far distant, when, in heaven, we, in like manner, shall be filled with that expectation, as we look down upon the places where our bodies await the signal of the resurrection.

Let not the image of our friends, as sick and in pain, occupy our thoughts. "For the former things are passed away." Their language, as they call back to us, is, "As dying, and behold, we live."

We who have children and friends that sleep

in Jesus, and who expect ourselves to be, with them, and with one another, children of the resurrection, will soon know each other in the presence of Christ. We shall have become reunited in the presence of each other to our loved and lost ones. The great question then will be, How did we fulfil God's special and benevolent designs in our trials? If we revisit scenes of deep affliction where death and the grave usurped their dread power over us for a season, we shall remember our misery as waters that pass away. In hope of this, we will patiently and joyfully labor and suffer. "The night is far spent; the day is at hand."

On a pleasant morning in April, three months from the time of her decease, the mortal part of the dear child whose name gives this book its title, was removed from its temporary resting place in the city, to her grave in the family cemetery. As the hands of her

father, which baptized her, laid her to rest in her sweet and peaceful bed, and the simple stone, with her chosen "lilies of the valley and rose buds" carved on it, was set up, — the gift of one whose consanguinity was made by him the delicate ground of claim to do this touching and abiding act of love, — it seemed as though, in some sense, there had already been brought to pass the saying which is written, "Death is swallowed up in victory."

But in the night, a gentle April shower fell; and as the thoughts were carried by it, spell-bound, from the chamber where she was born, to her newly-made grave, — that night being the first of her sleeping there, — it seemed very plain that, though Death had been conquered, the Grave still kept possession of the field. — Christ "will be thy destruction," O Grave, as he has been "thy plagues," O Death! The early rain seemed to have made good haste in visiting the fresh mound and the flower seeds already placed there, conspiring with them to cover the grave speedily with

emblems of the resurrection, as though, with confident boast and exultation, they would, beforehand, say, "Where is thy victory?" Simple thoughts and fancies, which we hardly dare utter, have wonderful power, in great sorrows, to change the whole current of the feelings; for while that soft shower was heard, falling on the grave, it seemed as if a heavenly watcher was in care of the place; and so, leaving them together, it was easy and pleasant to fall asleep.

And now, seeing that there is not one experience in this volume which is not, or may not be, enjoyed, and surpassed, by every dying saint, and by surviving friends, and as the narrative is thus saved from all just thought either of ostentation, or of setting forth a discouraging standard of experience, may the book find protection from those who, knowing the innocent weaknesses, and, at the same time, the blessedness, of those who mourn, will kindly appreciate the motives with which it is

written. For more than a year the narrative has been laid by, from indefinable reluctance at the thought of publication. But this affliction, which was, at first, like the bulb of the hyacinth with its white, pendulous roots in water, — those symbols of hope and pledges of growth, — has now bloomed and become fragrant with such comforts and consolations, that we venture to set the plant in our window, perchance it may meet the eye of one and another as they walk and are sad. Perhaps it may, here and there, win love and praise for Jesus. "HE HATH DONE ALL THINGS WELL."

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